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The Female Mind

by Robert Wright

IDENTITY

Against Identity

by Leon Wieseltier

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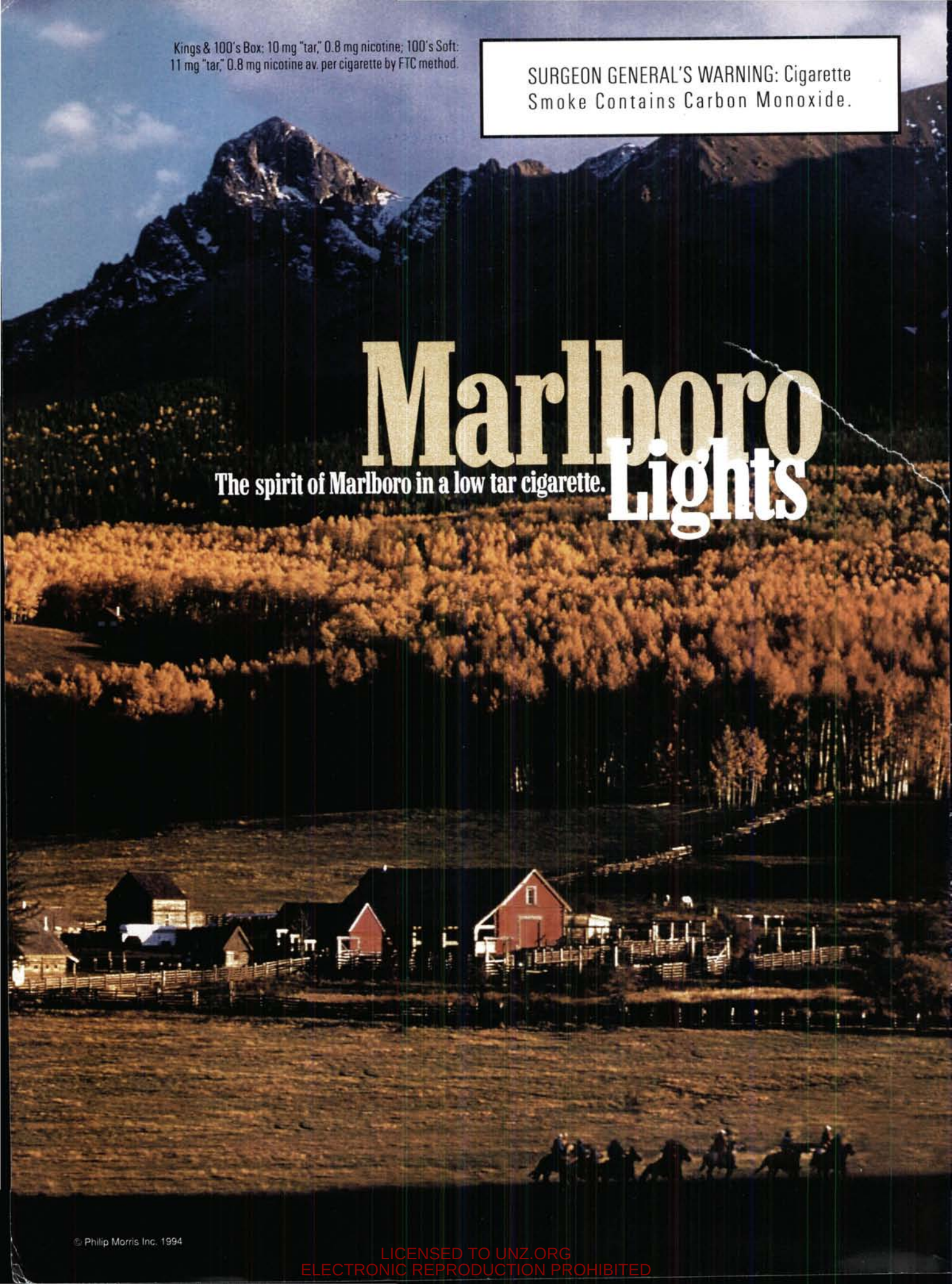
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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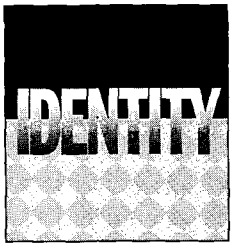

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CORRESPONDENCE

Race and I.Q.—your turn

To the editors:
I applaud your decision to publish Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein's "Race, Genes and I.Q.—An Apologia" (October 31), together with the accompanying critiques. I found the apologia interesting, provocative and unconvincing. Murray and Herrnstein offer nothing new, and a careful reader must conclude that the available scientific evidence does not support their thesis.

But THE NEW REPUBLIC well served its readers by placing both the apologia and the critiques in full view and allowing readers to come to their own conclusions. Sensationalized media focus on *The Bell Curve* makes exposure (at a superficial level) to its thesis inescapable. I for one am unlikely to spend the effort to read the book in its entirety and also to track down articles of opposing viewpoints. THE NEW REPUBLIC issue allowed me to read Murray's extended summary (in his own words) and to consider a spectrum of alternative views.

It was reported that there was a near mutiny by the editorial staff of your magazine over publication of the article. Some of the critiques remind me of the response of a Victorian matron upon learning of the theory that man is descended from the ape: "Pray God that it is not true. But if it is, then pray God that it not become generally known." Ideas, good or bad, are dealt with better in the light. Thank you for your courage and judgment in publishing the issue; it is why I subscribe to *The New Republic.*

G. LEIGH ANDERSON
Houston, Texas

To the editors:
TNR has taken a consistent and principled stand against Leonard Jeffries and other black proponents of racialist theories, castigating them as racists, charlatans and demagogues. The editors' condemnation has included black leaders who have shared platforms with Jeffries and similar figures, and also the universities and other organizations that have provided them public forums.

When Murray and Herrnstein put forward their equally repulsive racialist arguments, however, you not only defend their right to present their views, but put them on the cover of the magazine. It is hard to see the difference between the two cases, apart from the colors of the protagonists and the degree to which the views expressed confirm or threaten the smug self-satisfaction of the editors.

DAVID N. PLANK
East Lansing, Michigan

To the editors:
Of all the treatments of Murray and Herrnstein that I have seen, TNR's is by far the least responsible. Invited to publish an article on one of the book's most controversial subjects, Murray was then mugged on the way to publication by more than a dozen-and-a-half instant critics, few of them qualified to deal with the subject.

The responses of outsiders like Glenn Loury were more measured and intelligent than most of those from the magazine's own editors. The latter ranged from the hysterical equation of Murray with Johann Gottfried von Herder to the lynching of Murray and Herrnstein for footnoting a few dubious and politically incorrect studies.

The target of the name-calling was an author whose article the magazine had decided to publish, an article that must have been judged to make at least some plausible argument on an important topic. No one compelled the magazine to accept the article. TNR can boast about how tolerant it is in publishing articles with which it does not necessarily agree, but that tolerance gives it no license to assault the author. Who, after this, will want to publish on controversial subjects in this magazine? Who, having witnessed the juvenile and malicious reactions of some of your editors, will have confidence in their judgment?

DONALD L. HOROWITZ
Durham, North Carolina

To the editors:
I applaud the decision of the minority within TNR who held out for publication. It would have been nice if you had not also felt the need to present the many dissenting opinions ahead of the actual article. Where was the balance, the supporting views? Did no one agree with anything except the right to express an opinion and our right to read such an opinion?

Murray and Herrnstein did not invent this literature, nor have they distorted the reporting of its findings, regardless of the conclusions they wish to draw from it. Science will turn up many more disturbing results. Most dissenters seemed unable to recognize that social policy (and social behavior) does not inevitably follow from scientific findings. The finding that the taller man usually wins the presidency has done nothing to reform our campaign process (no handicapping based on height). Racists never need facts to justify their beliefs, and facts cannot change them.

It is tempting for me to consider that the extreme reaction among the editorial staff must be another example of the lack of scientific sophistication in our society, that we do not know how to reason with quantitative information, or how to place findings in a larger perspective.

I was more upset by the irrationality and even desperation expressed in several of the commentaries; and by the large number of ad hominem attacks. I'm pleased that the wiser souls and cooler heads among you prevailed.

NAME WITHHELD
Department of Psychology
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:
There is no need to congratulate here. You have already congratulated yourselves for having had the courage to open up and ventilate this controversial and, in some circles, heretical field of scientific inquiry. The implication is that those of us who see no need to explore this question are comparable to the Holy Inquisitors who refused to look through Galileo's telescope. Where will your courage take you next? A daring re-evaluation of the science of phrenology? Don't flatter yourselves that the ideas to which you have lent your prestigious platform have anything to do with an honest, empirical investigation of the human mind.

R. SAM DEESE
North Quincy, Massachusetts

To the editors:
Setting aside the question of nature or nurture, which Mickey Kaus belabors ("Behind the Curve," TRB, October 31), consider instead the value of the service that Murray and Herrnstein provide by catalyzing discussion of a neglected problem: the failure of America's present social welfare system.

We need to overhaul, transform and change the incentives of welfare. If *The Bell Curve* does nothing more than propel us down that path, if it spotlights our disgrace while solidifying our public will to ameliorate the situation, it is worthwhile indeed.

LOUISE BOTTINI
Princeton, New Jersey

To the editors:
Murray and Herrnstein seem to believe that racial groups display collective predilections to perform certain cognitive functions exceptionally well, and that these predilections lead them to succeed in certain activities and not in others. For example, they claim that Asians' high "visuospatial I.Q.s" explain why Asian American students "abound in science subjects [and] in engineering" and "are scarce at law schools." History shows, however, that any attempt to make a con-

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nection between race-based cognitive propensities and achievement is futile.

For example, many Asian cultures were actively hostile to scientific endeavor for most of the modern era; despite their allegedly world-beating genes, Japan was the most explicitly anti-scientific, anti-technological society in the world until Commodore Perry liberated their inner visuospatiality in 1854. Similarly, white Protestants, whom the authors place "some rungs from the top" on the I.Q. ladder (where they are also more likely to favor non-mathematical pursuits than Asians) have been pioneers in every sphere of natural science for centuries.

MATTHEW W. MAGUIRE
Somerville, Massachusetts

To the editors:

The most disturbing result of the essay (and book) by Murray and Herrnstein is the sputtering it provoked. Both Murray and Herrnstein and the sputterers, however, are misleading on two issues:

(1) The moral and economic case for redistribution is *stronger* to the extent that economic status is inherited. Both conservatives and liberals are screwed up on this issue. Conservatives are more prone to attribute difference to "nature" but to oppose redistribution. Liberals are more prone to attribute difference to "nurture" but to favor redistribution. Both positions are incoherent.

(2) Racial differences in I.Q. may be intractable, but differences in other correlates of success clearly are not. Racial differences in some of these correlates have in fact increased sharply since (and, plausibly, in response to) the broadening of social insurance. The total black unemployment rate was about the same as the white rate until the 1930s but is now more than twice the white rate. The unemployment rate of black teenage males was about the same as the white rate in 1954 (when first measured at this level) but is now more than twice the white rate. The substantial recent increases in these and other racial differences occurred despite a reduction in the I.Q. difference and in overt discrimination.

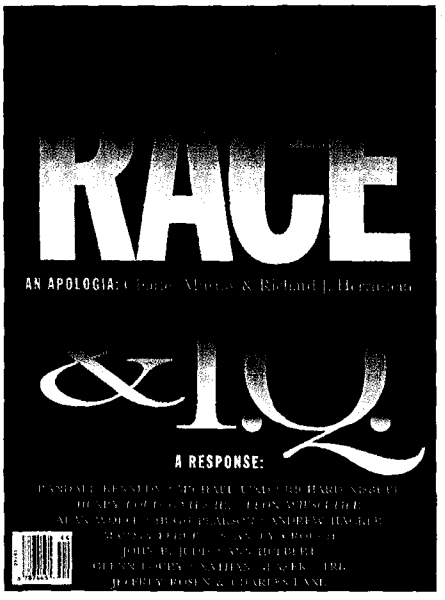
WILLIAM A. NISKANEN
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Is Jeffrey Rosen for real? Perhaps he should come out of his Twilight Zone reverie and review his article "Is Affirmative Action Doomed?" (October 17), and then re-examine his response to Murray and Herrnstein ("Neo-Nazis!" October 31).

In his October 17 article, Rosen wrote: "Out of all the minority applicants to all the law schools *in the country* only 289 blacks and ninety-six Mexican-Americans had scores high enough to put them in the discretionary zone for white applicants to the University of Texas." He stated earlier in the article that in 1992 *only one black out of 280 had a score over 199* for presumptive admittance (to University of Texas Law School).

Now, in a quirky maneuver, Rosen criticizes Murray and Herrnstein, calling them racists for their scientific investigation of why (for example) only one black out of 280 had a score of 199. Rosen takes Murray, Herrnstein, Rushton, Lynn and Pearson to task for authoring works he characterizes as racist. But the approach of Murray's book, which Rosen rails against, appears to shore up the statistics Rosen used to make his own argument in his affirmative action article. They simply analyze why the statistics



he uses appear to have remained static despite continuing intervention.

RUTH M. VANCE
St. Louis, Missouri

To the editors:

Murray states that the only preschool programs that have had a long-term effect on general intelligence are those that resort to "truly heroic efforts, putting children into full-time, year-round, highly enriched day care from within a few months of birth and keeping them there for the first five years of life...." It should be noted that this "truly heroic" environment fits the description of the average white suburban preschooler's daily life.

ELIZABETH AUSTIN
Oak Park, Illinois

To the editors:

Murray and Herrnstein give away the game in the first paragraph of their article when they write of the "growing suspicion (among white elites) that fundamental racial differences are implicated in the social and economic gap that continues to separate blacks and whites, especially alleged genetic differences in intelligences." All Murray and Herrnstein have proved is that members of the "white elite" are as likely to harbor racist sentiments as anyone else. That's not exactly news.

JEFFREY BENDIX
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

To the editors:

I am regularly dismayed by the paucity of your female contributors. But this time you have really outdone yourselves: twenty-one of twenty-two writers in the October 31 issue are men. Do you even try?

MEREDITH WADMAN
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It may sound silly to some, or the ranting of a raving maniac to others, yet breastfeeding one's baby for as long as possible, preferably a year or more, may truly be the great I.Q. equalizer. The scientific evidence continues to conclude that the cognitive abilities of formula-fed infants may be inferior to those babies who are breastfed. Yet, in 1994 only 31 percent of all African American mothers left the hospital breastfeeding their babies, compared with 56 percent of white mothers. In 1992 20 percent of these African American mothers did the same, and only 52 percent of the white mothers. The percentage of African American babies being breastfed was even lower in the '70s and '80s, as far as I am aware, with the differential between the races remaining fairly constant. The result of these decades of artificially fed babies is critical in the vastly differing I.Q.s between the races.

AMY SPORER SCHIFF
Campbell, California

To the editors:

The most chilling observation in your "Race and I.Q." issue does not come from Murray or any of those who respond to his essay. It comes from Fred Barnes, who reports that "America is experiencing its first talk radio election" ("Look Who's Talking," Washington Diarist). In this context, when Murray contends that whites who accept his theory have no "good reason" to change their behavior toward blacks, he is being more than a little "too idealistic." He is practicing willful self-delusion. Can he even pretend to hope that his book produces a dispassionate debate among truth-lovers? Limbaugh, Grant, Imus and their imitators across the United States are undoubtedly salivating at the promise of *The Bell Curve.*

DAVID BORNSTEIN
New York, New York

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FROM WASHINGTON

Blame George

The election is over. Let the recriminations begin. Hillary. Isn't she to blame? You bet! Elizabeth Drew's new book, *On the Edge,* only confirms that the First Lady lobbied tenaciously for her husband to invest increasing amounts of political capital in her doomed health care plan, while initiatives that might have ensured the president's popularity (reinventing government, welfare reform) were shoved into the background. The result is Speaker Gingrich.

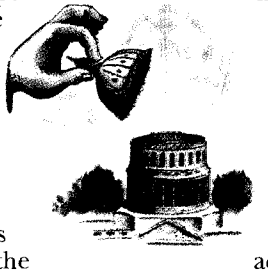
But, as a political scapegoat, Hillary Rodham Clinton has shortcomings. Most obviously, since she can't be fired, she offers no possibility of a cathartic sacrifice. Hence the inevitable search for other, untenured culprits. Magaziner? Christopher? Begala? Shalala? All solid candidates. But there is one I fear will be denied his fair share of blame, in part because the press protects him. As a White House reporter told me, "Early on, I was warned that you can write anything about this administration if you don't cross two people: Hillary and George."

True, George Stephanopoulos did get a few days of bad press in May of 1993, when he lost his job as White House communications director and became "senior adviser to the president." But his boosters fought back, arguing that in his new role Stephanopoulos got to spend *more* time with the president. When that turned out to be true, the flattery recommenced. *Vanity Fair* declared that "no White House aide has ever had the high-profile glamour of George Stephanopoulos." TNR placed him at the center of a network of young, successful "Stephanopoulites" who were "the solution, in part, to Clinton's competence problem." Bob Woodward's *The Agenda* described a near-dysfunctional president kept on track by Stephanopoulos's benign machinations.

Is it really possible that this nice, handsome young man has been a prime cause of the Clinton debacle? Yes it is. The indictment has four counts.

(1) *Overspinning*: In the 1992 campaign, Stephanopoulos urged Clinton to publish a detailed economic plan, even though doing so violated the old political rule against making too many specific proposals. "Specificity is the character issue this year," he said. What he didn't—and doesn't—seem to recognize is that honesty is also a character issue.

This past election night, around 11 p.m., Stephanopoulos appeared on CNN. The Democrats were already down about seven Senate seats. "We're having a pretty good night so far," said the senior adviser to the president. The point isn't simply that this was a typical, ludicrous Stephanopoulos lie. The point is that anyone who had taken note of the trend toward cynicism in American politics would know that such lies don't work anymore—especially lies delivered in the flat, robotic intonation that has become Stephanopoulos's trademark.



(2) *He turned the press against his boss*: Lying was only one technique Stephanopoulos employed to alienate a White House press corps predisposed to favor the incoming administration. Like the Clintons, Stephanopoulos seems to hate the press, failing to appreciate the extent to which reporters saved Clinton from scandals that would have sunk just about any other politician. But even if the media had done Clinton wrong, a good press aide would have had no trouble sucking in status-anxious journalists with inside information and courtesies. Stephanopoulos gratuitously antagonized them.

(3) *He's an '80s liberal*: According to Marjorie Williams's *Vanity Fair* profile, in 1980 Stephanopoulos briefly considered becoming a *Bush* delegate. He then moved left as a reaction against Reagan. That means that virtually his entire history in liberal politics consists of the shallow, defensive anti-Reagan battles of the 1980s—in particular, battles fought by Representative Richard Gephardt and other congressional Democrats, for whom Stephanopoulous worked for most of the decade.

The big domestic theme of congressional Democrats during this period was "fairness." As Stephanopoulos put it, "We have had this decade where Americans became more divided economically—the rich got richer, the poor got poorer." The "middle class had gotten screwed." That isn't spin. That's what Stephanopoulos believes. It was, he said, what Clinton would be "focusing on."

The trouble is, '80s Democrats had no plausible plan for achieving their goal of "restoring the middle class." The income trends had deep, long-term causes—mainly the increasing value of skills and smarts in a global economy. That wasn't a political problem when Democrats were simply railing against Reagan tax and budget cuts. But it's a big problem now that Clinton is president, the economy is strong and the poor are still getting relatively poorer. The core promise of the Clinton presidency, as envisioned by Stephanopoulos—namely, to undo the '80s—was hollow. It couldn't be fulfilled.

(4) *He's still Gephardt's boy*: Like a good networker, Stephanopoulos has remained loyal to his congressional mentors. Last summer, some of Clinton's advisers suggested that the president embark on a fall clean-up-Congress offensive, pushing a package that included lobbying reform, campaign reform and an end to Congress's practice of exempting itself from the laws it imposes on others. That would have appealed to cynical voters. It didn't happen. Stephanopoulos (and Chief of Staff Leon Panetta) urged Clinton to accede to the Democrats' congressional leaders, who didn't approve of the idea.

Stephanopoulos's congressional orientation has had other disastrous effects. House Democrats don't like dealing with Republicans, and Stephanopoulos has been a consistent advocate of building "left-in" coalitions that don't rely on GOP votes. That worked on the budget, barely. It failed miserably everywhere else, especially on health care. House Democrats are also extremely sensitive to the demands of interest groups. So it's no surprise to read Drew's book and learn that Stephanopoulos opposed farm subsidy cuts, Social Security COLA cuts and dramatic deficit reduction. He was spectacularly wrong in repeatedly urging Clinton not to push the North American Free Trade Agreement. He thought it wouldn't pass. After all, the House Democrats opposed it.

Even a random process of finger-pointing would have subjected Stephanopoulos to far more criticism than he's received. How has he stayed chic? Only part of the reason, I think, is that reporters fear he will cut off their "access." The other part is that his chicness itself now protects him. George Stephanopoulos is what passes for "high-profile glamour" in Washington. If he tumbles, that leaves Washington, and the reporters in it, feeling a lot less glamorous themselves. If the man was fat and balding, he'd be in trouble.

MICKEY KAUS

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

NOVEMBER 28, 1994

CLINTON'S SECOND CHANCE

Those with sympathies for Bill Clinton might be tempted—perhaps rightly—to view last Tuesday's election returns as an unmitigated disaster. Never mind sympathies; condolences seem in order. Newt Gingrich as speaker? Pete Wilson re-elected handsomely; moderate Democrats like Dave McCurdy and Jim Cooper humiliated; icons like Ann Richards and Mario Cuomo smashed. Worse still, Senator Alfonse D'Amato now controls the Banking Committee and the governor of New York. Let the Whitewater hearings begin! Jesse Helms could make life impossible at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; and the occasional brilliance of Daniel Patrick Moynihan will no longer guide the Senate Finance Committee. Within the Republican Party, as Fred Barnes pointed out in these pages ("The Newtoids Cometh!" November 7), the shift toward Gingrichism is made more acute by the new speaker's triumph in the House. We may soon look back on Bob Dole's period of ascendancy as a responsible era. Even when Democrats won, it was hard to hope: when the big winners in the party are Chuck Robb and Edward Kennedy, it is not exactly a moment of renaissance.

And yet—the voters were moody, but they did not go nuts. Michael Huffington, the worst little hologram in Texas, did not win in California, after spending $25 million (our only regret is that he did not spend $50 million); Oliver North, with a huge turnout from the radical right and an enormous amount of money, lost easily in Virginia; the empty suits of Mitt Romney and Chuck Haytaian will not go to the Senate; even in the District of Columbia, Marion Barry was delivered a rebuff—if, alas, not a defeat—from a feisty Republican, Carol Schwartz. The ejection of the jurassic Dan Rostenkowski, the exhausted Tom Foley and the drab Jim Sasser showed a healthy popular disdain for Washington types who take their electorates for granted. And just why should New Yorkers have re-elected Mario Cuomo for yet another term of paleoliberal drift? In this admirable desire to shake up the system, Americans have now joined the Japanese and the Italians in unseating an ancient and moribund political satrapy—in this case, forty years of increasingly complacent and corrupt Democratic hegemony.

Moreover, it would be wrong, we think, to see this election as simply a rejection of Clintonism. In some ways, Clintonism, as originally conceived, is consistent with what the voters have just expressed. In 1992 it was clear that a moderate Republican, George Bush, couldn't deliver domestic reform with a divided Republican Party and Democratic majorities in the House and Senate. So when Bill Clinton and Al Gore ran as moderate Democrats, geared to new, practical solutions to social problems, they were given a Democratic Congress to help them. They promised to cut middle-class taxes, reinvent government, trim the deficit, reform both welfare and health care. But it turned out in office that the institutional pull of the Old Democrats was too strong. Welfare reform was put off; health care reform, thanks to that crusty paleoliberal, Hillary Rodham Clinton, became a massive Great Society contraption; a stimulus package was attempted and then aborted; even laudable reforms—such as ending discrimination against gays in the military—were presented as concessions to liberal interests. Because of this, the good things Clinton and Gore did—cutting the deficit, expanding free trade, helping the working poor, supporting a democratic Russia, rescuing Haiti, even reinventing government—were obscured in the public mind. And Republicans played a cynical game of opposition.

The good election day news for Clinton is that Republican game is now over. Republican power without responsibility disappeared this week. Voters responded to Clinton's entrapment in Old Democrat politics by giving him a powerful weapon: a Republican Congress. The president should now call the Republicans' bluff and give them what they want. Don't play a Truman game: you're too weak. Do the opposite. Propose a tax cut, but insist on a line-item veto to cut spending to match it; demand that Republicans propose a budget that actually will end the deficit—and promise to sign it; push for a tough version of welfare reform that Republicans won't dare oppose; insist that the Republicans pass GATT, or accuse them of obstructionism; move reinventing government again to the top of the agenda and dare Republicans to run away from it; propose a moderate health care reform package and insist that Congress play ball. What, after all, at this point, has the president got to lose? He might even rediscover what got him to the White House in the first place. •

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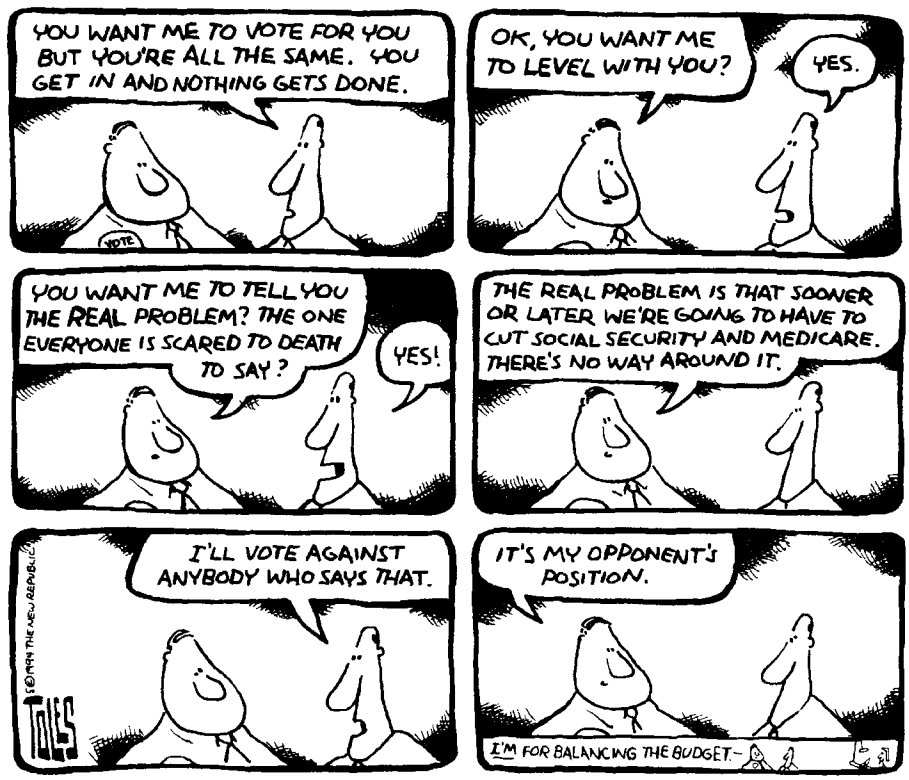
ELECTION NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: After stating that her two children were abducted by an unidentified black man, South Carolinian Susan Smith confessed to murdering them. New York taxi drivers began installing video cameras in their cars to prevent crime. "I think the mother killing the two children in South Carolina vividly reminds every American how sick this society is getting and how much we need to change things," said Newt Gingrich. "The only way you get change is to vote Republican." Gingrich was re-elected and will become speaker of the House in January. Attorneys for Carolina lawyer Mark Kinty, accused of fraud for "routinely" billing clients more than 1,000 hours in a 744-hour work month, said, "Actual time is not attorney billable time." It was decided that Al Cowlings, who was seen by millions on national television driving O.J. Simpson in his white Bronco, would not be indicted due to insufficient evidence. Former National Football League star Steve Largent, a Republican and wide receiver, was elected to Congress from Oklahoma. MTV declined to air Michael Sweet's video "Ain't No Safe Way," which promotes sexual abstinence. Matt's ex-boyfriend, Jeff, on *Melrose Place* told the world he is HIV-positive. Police in Belfast opened Larkin's Way, a road separating Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods. New York Governor Mario Cuomo was defeated in his re-election bid. Ronald Reagan said he had Alzheimer's disease. "We could see this deterioration beginning some time ago," said Representative and former White House aide Dana Rohrabacher. The University of Minnesota School of Social Work banned students from using perfumes, colognes or shampoos that are "strongly scented." Former minister Paul Hill was convicted of killing a Florida abortion doctor. A survey of Capitol Hill politicians' offices by D.C. pizza franchises concluded that Ted Kennedy's aides are the worst tippers. Kennedy was re-elected by a wide margin. Maneuver inventor Henry Heimlich was revealed to be using malaria to try to cure AIDS patients in China. The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, up against a foe they could never defeat, were deemed to depict "excessive violence" by the Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council and were pulled from a children's network. Bill Clinton's horoscope urged him to "make this declaration: 'I am going to proceed in a manner that will befuddle you.' " At a post-election news conference, Clinton was asked whether the Democrats would become a permanent minority. He replied that we should "take a little nap."


YOU WANT ME TO VOTE FOR YOU BUT YOU'RE ALL THE SAME. YOU GET IN AND NOTHING GETS DONE.
VOTE
OK, YOU WANT ME TO LEVEL WITH YOU?
YES.
YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU THE REAL PROBLEM? THE ONE EVERYONE IS SCARED TO DEATH TO SAY?
YES!
THE REAL PROBLEM IS THAT SOONER OR LATER WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE. THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT.
I'LL VOTE AGAINST ANYBODY WHO SAYS THAT.
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TOLES
IT'S MY OPPONENT'S POSITION.
I'M FOR BALANCING THE BUDGET.

MOURNING IN AMERICA: The Republican sweep will no doubt cause real suffering for—guess who?—the worst off, thanks to the triumph of some genuinely mean-spirited candidates. Worse, some of the surly electorate's crudest urges this year were packaged into ballot initiatives; illegal immigrants and homosexuals were targeted especially. At least two will now become law. Most notoriously, California's Proposition 187, which denies education and medical benefits to illegal immigrants, passed easily. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund will immediately file a suit, based on a 1982 Supreme Court ruling that illegal immigrant children are entitled to schooling. Governor Pete Wilson, as he stood on the victory stump thanking "all the different people of all different colors who helped re-elect me," vowed to fight until the Court's decision is overturned. Meanwhile, anti-gay measures in Idaho and Oregon—which would have trumped existing anti-discrimination laws, censored library materials and forbidden discussion of homosexuality in schools—were rejected by slim margins. In Florida's Alachua County, however, an amendment that repeals a county anti-discrimination law, and prevents similar future laws from passing, won handily—a frightening omen of what the GOP victory might mean for civil liberties everywhere.

SILVER LINING No. 1: In Wyoming, good news. The Human Life Protection Act, the only anti-abortion refer-

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endum in the country, was defeated. The law would have outlawed most abortions and imprisoned offending doctors for up to fourteen years. Thankfully, Wyoming's 466,000 citizens weren't having any of it (the state, incidentally, has the lowest abortion rate in the country). Despite religious right pressure, the sentiment against government intrusion in our lives was extended to our bodies as well.

RATHER BLATHER: Tallying up Dan Rather's clichés, non sequiturs and malapropisms has long been a favorite election night pastime. Without further ado:

"In Tennessee—T stands for Tennessee, T stands for Thelma and in Tennessee there is T-double-T-trouble for the Democrats tonight."

"Speaker Foley's back is to the wall. His shirttail's on fire. And the bill collector is at the door."

"Frank Lautenberg has had his version of the tong wars.... But he holds onto it."

"A lot of tight races out there tonight. So let's hit those chips with another dose of salsa, and go to our correspondent in Texas."

"Tonight, Chuck Robb's ship came in. But it simply docked at the—Well, his ship came in, period."

"Colorado Governor Roy Romer. Also facing a real ding-dong battle."

HERE'S YOUR HAT, WHAT'S YOUR HURRY?: After enduring Newt Gingrich's cackling pumpkin-head on the tube every night for the next two years, those legendarily disgruntled voters who sent their members packing on a rising tide of anger, etc., might just begin to wax nostalgic for the Democratic days of yore. We're a little moist around the eyes already. But there are at least two Democratic wheezers we can't say we're sorry to see go. With little regret, we bid adieu to Jack Brooks, the callous Texan who regarded his Judiciary Committee as a cash box for the Lone Star State; you'll remember his foiled attempt to lard the crime bill with perks for his folks back home. Then there's Dan Rostenkowski, whose experiments in graft (remember stamps-for-cash?) were remarkable not only for their greasiness but also for their pettiness. The consolation for Rosty is that welterweight sirloins and bone-dry martinis are abundant in Chicago, too. Outside the capital, though, he'll have to pay for them.

I THOUGHT YOU SAID IT WAS THE ECONOMY, STUPID: Economically secure voters normally re-elect incumbents, even unpopular ones. By pocketbook standards, Republican challenger George W. Bush should have been crushed in his quest for the governorship of Texas. After all, the state's economy flourished under Ann Richards. On her watch, the state added 580,000 jobs. Texas moved up to a respectable sixteenth in income growth nationally. She cultivated high-tech companies, and Austin became home to the second-largest cluster of computer jobs in the country. She balanced four budgets with no tax hikes. Yet Bush won decisively. That so many Texans voted against a governor with such fiscal bona fides and a 60 percent approval rate might lead Democrats to rethink their campaign themes for 1996.

SILVER LINING No. 2: Bush's election will dismay many; this is a man who seems to have all of his father's worst characteristics and none of his best ones. But we at TNR don't see it as a total loss. If George W. is as articulate and coherent as George H. W., we might just initiate a new watch for Bushisms: The Next Generation.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO SANTORUM: We're especially sorry to see the defeat of Pennsylvania Senator Harris Wofford. A former college president and co-founder of the Peace Corps, Wofford spearheaded national service and a health care compromise during his short tenure. If anyone embodied the free-thinking, non-career politician that voters are supposedly looking for, he did. But he proved a shade too principled for Pennsylvanians. His successor, conservative Republican Rick Santorum, fiercely opposes gun control, abortion and family leave; he drew his campaign mailing lists from the Pro-Life Federation, the Christian Coalition and the National Rifle Association. Teresa Heinz, widow of the late Republican Senator John Heinz, called him "critical of everything, indifferent to nuance and incapable of compromise." And they were voting *against* gridlock?

NEW YORK STORIES: The defeat of Governor Mario Cuomo in New York is probably attributable to his insufferable moral and intellectual hauteur and to his ideological orthodoxy. New Yorkers have lived with these unpleasantnesses for years. But since his twelve years of rule were coterminous with the decline of their state on almost every index of social and economic health, there is no great lament for his passing, even among certified liberals. Of course, the man who succeeds him, George Pataki, is a virtual nothing, and, judging from his campaign, apparently without a real idea in his head; he is a robotic figure invented by Senator Al D'Amato. Since the Republican mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, campaigned for Cuomo, Pataki and D'Amato will likely wreak revenge on the city. This would be sad since, to the surprise of many, the Giuliani administration has been financially prudent and socially responsive. It wouldn't take much malice from Albany to paralyze City Hall. There is one happy outcome from the New York results: the election of Elizabeth McCaughey as lieutenant governor. An American historian and a think-tanker at the Manhattan Institute, McCaughey first drew public attention with an article in TNR ("No Exit," February 7) on the proposed Clinton health legislation. We wouldn't be surprised if she were the only person at the time to have read the whole Clinton bill, and she found its awful flaws.

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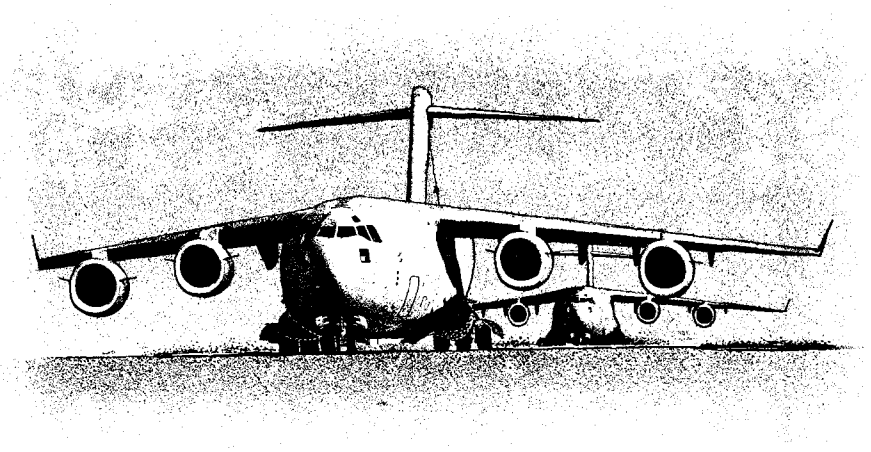

Operation Vigilant Warrior Gets A Big Lift.

For its first operational mission, the C-17 got a big assignment–supporting the U.S. buildup in Operation Vigilant Warrior. On October 14 and 15, two C-17s delivered 160,000 pounds of U.S. Army equipment, including an outsized five-ton rolling command post and two outsized five-ton M934 expandable communications vans, to the Arabian Peninsula. Moving big payloads big distances. Fast. Meeting critical security needs. It's a mission custom-made for the C-17. And the C-17 is proud to serve.

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She is a serious policy wonk, with generally progressive instincts. Being lieutenant governor really ain't much. But as one of her party's few non-doctrinaire intellectuals, she might help New York, and the country.

WHOOPS!: Hindsight must now be nagging President Clinton about his politically calculated Supreme Court selections. When Clinton picked respectable but safe judges over more exciting and visionary candidates (like Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt), he did so largely on the basis of the prospective confirmation vote count in the Senate. Babbitt, of course, would have passed the Senate, though perhaps with a small skirmish. Now, though, with Anita Hill's Grand Inquisitor Orrin Hatch chairing the Judiciary Committee, hopes for a bold appointment and a reshaped Court are dead.

SILVER LINING No. 3: One of the more unwholesome congressional aspirants this year was the appropriately named Orson Swindle, Ross Perot's sometime frontman. Running in Hawaii, Swindle met defeat at the hands of the pony-tailed and, in the current climate, aggressively liberal Neil Abercrombie—who is also, delightfully, an incumbent.

RACE CASE: Race, as it has been in virtually every Republican victory since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, was an implicit but powerful element in this election. The party's winning issues—crime, taxes, welfare reform—are proxies for white fears of the mostly black underclass, and for resentment toward Democratic policies that have failed to eliminate the social ills of the inner city. This year, the backlash peaked. Yet Americans of all races may be tiring of the politics of polarization. In Oklahoma, black Republican J. C. Watts won a House seat with 52 percent of the vote in an 80 percent white district; Connecticut's Gary Franks was re-elected in a similar fashion. These results undermine the theory behind the Guinierian Voting Rights Act amendments of 1982, which require states to create "majority-minority" House districts so blacks can be represented by blacks. Although Democrats invented this divisive law, the Republicans enforced it strictly once they realized that the new black districts would be mirrored by even more white-majority districts. The racial gerrymandering of 1990 was key to this year's Republican victory. But now the anti-quota Republican majority in Congress has the power to eliminate it—and rise above their recent history as the party of racial "wedge issues." Few issues will more clearly test Gingrich's claim that his was a victory for principle.

SILVER LINING No. 4: For the Beaver State at least. The secret winners in this election may be the citizens of the great state of Oregon. Not only did they elect a superb New Democrat to the governorship—John Kitzhaber, who, as president of the state Senate, devised Oregon's innovative health care plan—they also defeated a number of retrograde ballot measures, including an anti-gay initiative. Plus: the state's moderate and (sometimes justifiably) maligned senators, Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood, will now head megawatt committees: Appropriations and Finance, respectively. Expect these Washington survivors to work with Kitzhaber to empty a cornucopia of worthy new science, transportation and environmental restoration projects on a state already blessed with the finest pears, apples and hazelnuts in the nation.

MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS: No place has more to fear now than Washington, D.C. The debt-plagued capital relies on congressional largess, and the size of the check depends on the mayor's Hilltop schmoozing skills. Marion Barry wasn't exactly beloved in the Capitol back when the committee rooms were lined with Democrats. Imagine what a hit he'll be in a roomful of Newtoids. Apparently, more than a few D.C. residents had the same worries; Carol Schwartz, the Republican candidate, surprised almost everyone by winning 43 percent of the vote. Gracious to the end, Schwartz delivered her concession speech, then went to Barry headquarters and stood with the reborn pol as he declared victory. Barry hugged Schwartz. Schwartz hugged Barry. Then they puckered up and kissed statehood goodbye.

A MORE IMPORTANT LOSS: We are saddened by the passing of Erwin Knoll, editor of the left-wing *Progressive* magazine, who suffered a fatal attack on November 2. Knoll spoke wisely and eloquently for causes on the left, in his magazine and on "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour." Though we disagreed with him at times, particularly his isolationist leanings, we admired his unrelenting defense of free speech (not always popular in his circles) and his genuine and unsentimental solicitude for those living under the shadow of poverty. As the left became increasingly humorless, Knoll and the *Progressive* proudly forsook stridency for the more persuasive and endearing tools of acute thought and wit.

ADDENDUM: An earlier draft of Andrew Sullivan's essay, "Alone Again, Naturally," on page 47 appeared in the Summer 1994 issue of *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. •

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THE FLAPJACK FILE

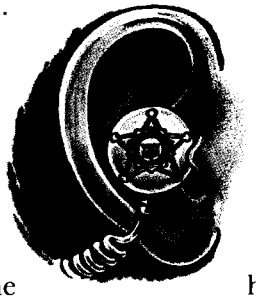
NICE BUSTLE

By Douglas G. McGrath

Monday, October 24

Things sure are glum in the White House. Mr. Steph is furious because his views on foreign policy are not taken seriously. Also, *Cosmopolitan* has canceled his swimsuit calendar. (They dropped him for a Mexican pool boy who worked for both Ms. Feinstein and Mr. Huffington.) Mrs. Rodham-Flap, broken by the health care defeat, wanders the halls in an apron that says "HAIL TO THE CHEF!" offering pigs-in-a-blanket. Even more shocking: Flap is so sad he won't take them. He's down to five meals a day and barely forces down seconds!

It's the polls: he is more unpopular than any president in history at this point in his term. He had a phone call this morning that typified the whole situation. It was Speaker Foley. "Mr. President, you're supposed to speak at a rally for me this weekend but I'm going to have to cancel because I have a dental type of—there's just a little root work I need done and I—but also I think we're going to cancel that rally—I mean it might rain or—I mean we forgot to fill out the rally forms. We just forgot to fill out those rally forms, but listen, just as soon as somebody fills those out and we get them back and open them, if there's no kind of weather and my root work is O.K., hey, you're on."



Flap said dejectedly, "Leon, isn't there anywhere I can go to help a Democrat?"

Flap is going to the Middle East.

Wednesday, October 26

To make this look like an actual foreign policy trip, he brought Mr. Chris with him, though the irony is if it were a real foreign policy trip, Mr. Chris would have been left at home. Mr. Chris has been doing his best to get back in Flap's good graces. For instance, he has his secretary with him. She's nearly 100 and Agent Searle swears he saw a spider web behind her ear. When she walked by, Mr. Chris elbowed the president and said, "Pretty hot, eh?" Flap bit his lip for a second and then said, "Um, yeah. Nice bustle."

Flap loved the desert. He ran ahead of the group, giving me and the other guys on protection detail heart attacks, and fell backward into the sand. He flapped his arms and said, "Look! Sand angels!" After we left, a group of Bedouins fell into the angel and couldn't get out. They had to be rescued by a crane.

Saturday, October 29

A wild, sad day. The Flaps were meeting with a nice man, very tan, named Mr. Spelling, and Flap said, "Please, Aaron, let Alison get back together with Billy. Chelsea says *Melrose Place* isn't the same with them apart." Before Mr. Spelling could answer, Mr. Steph rushed in. "Bad news! A gunman fired into the press office!"

Flap stared at him for a long time. "And what exactly is the bad news?"

Agent Searle brought the assailant in. He reminded me of someone, but it wasn't until Flap said, "Am I just hungry or does anybody smell a ferret?" that it hit me: it was Mr. Magaziner! "I've simplified the plan!" he said. "Now you only fill out the forms in nine-plicate! And no more regional alliances! Now it's called a Jurisdictional Health Cartel and all patients have to do to get treatment is answer a ninety-five-question National Health Exam and boom! Medicine's on the way!"

Thursday, November 3

Usually at campaign rallies, we try to keep people from getting too close to the president. Now we try to keep them from getting away. Just for example: Flap was speaking in New York and was saying how "Mario Cuomo had improved mass transit and lowered the crime rate in New York by believing in a place called Hope and canceling his reservations for a town called Fear." This was only twenty minutes into it and already half the crowd had left. The other half would have left only a lot had been mugged and the rest were still waiting for a bus.

So we launched Presidential Protection Initiative 212 (Operation Whoa!). First we began all rallies by announcing, "Right after President Clinton, Richard Gere." That hasn't worked so well since Mr. Gere left in the middle of Flap's speech. In California, we had a hologram of Kato Kaelin modeling briefs. In Virginia we lit a burning moat around the rally site. When Flap mentioned his new covenant, a lot of folks swam through it anyway. The one thing that worked was having Mr. Gore stand at the only exit. As people approached, he would say, "May I talk to you about the addictive co-dependent relationship we have with Mother Earth?" People went right back to their seats.

Wednesday, November 9

The election is over—a total slaughter for the Dems. "Is there no good news?" Flap asked. Mr. Leon took a bite of a Jello mold Mrs. Flap had made. "Yes," he said, wincing a bit as he swallowed. "It appears you have united the country."

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH, a New York writer, is a frequent TNR contributor.

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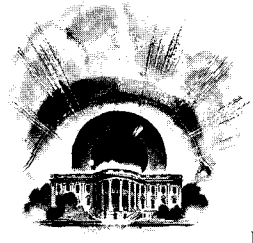
WHITE HOUSE WATCH

THE ODD COUPLE

By Fred Barnes

Chances are you've never thought about similarities between Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich. But allies of the new House speaker have, and so have the president's pals. "Anyone who dismisses the fact that Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich are from the same generation is missing something very important," insists Jeff Eisenach, president of the Progress and Freedom Foundation, Gingrich's think tank. "They share a perspective on the world Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole could never share." They do? Yes, says former Gingrich aide Frank Gregorsky: they're both policy wonks with photographic memories, salesmen who think they can persuade anyone of anything, smug baby boomers who are shocked when someone questions their motives. I'd add one more similarity. They're managers who operate amid utter chaos. Gingrich runs his personal conglomerate—House office, PAC, college program, foundation—with Clinton-like inefficiency.



That's all interesting stuff, but it doesn't explain why Clinton and Gingrich may cooperate as often as they clash. The truth is they desperately need each other. To win re-election in 1996, Clinton must reinvent himself as a New Democrat. Gingrich needs to reinvent himself, too. Now, he's the most reviled Republican in the country, seen by many Democrats and much of the press as Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon and Bob Roberts rolled into one. Gingrich wants to shed this image. But pretending "bipartisan" is his middle name, as he has following the GOP's congressional takeover, won't suffice. Nor will promises he won't display as speaker "the same behavior pattern" (his words) he exhibited as House GOP whip.

He's got to recruit Clinton on some issues, preferably high-toned ones. The criteria are: issues that don't betray Gingrich's conservative base and cast Clinton as a New Democrat. For starters, there's the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Then, there's telecommunications and welfare reform. Gregorsky thinks saving the inner city and preserving black families are grounds for Clinton-Gingrich agreement. There's also job training. Gingrich talks up training programs that are privately run. Clinton would be hard-pressed to object to them.

Getting Clinton and Gingrich together won't be a snap. Impediments loom, particularly at the White House. George Stephanopoulos, and other aides who worked in Congress in the 1980s, see Gingrich as evil. When Gingrich joined eleven House Republicans in September to confer with Clinton on the crime bill, Stephanopoulos "never said a word," according to Gingrich aide Tony Blankley, who was at the meeting. "He sat in his chair glaring." When the session ended, Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and Chief of Staff Leon Panetta shook hands with Gingrich. "Stephanopoulos skulked out of the room by a side door," says Blankley. Stephanopoulos says the idea he glared at Gingrich is "just silly." He refers to Gingrich as "a smart man."

A more important Gingrich detractor is Panetta, who spent fourteen years with Gingrich in the House and grew to dislike him. Panetta thinks Gingrich is a partisan ideologue with whom normal civilities are barely possible. He was appalled by Gingrich's comments during the campaign, notably the one about Clinton as "the enemy of normal Americans." Gingrich says he was quoted out of context from a private chat with lobbyists and that "middle-class Americans" was what he meant. "Words have consequences," says Stephanopoulos disapprovingly. And Panetta didn't buy Gingrich's explanation, either. In an interview with NBC News, he declared that Gingrich "is meeting ... with special interests and pledging he will basically represent their interests. I think he's got to answer whether he represents normal Americans." Gingrich, in turn, was offended by Panetta's remark.

Others in Clinton's orbit—political guru Tony Coelho, State Department official David Gergen, national security adviser Tony Lake—believe Gingrich is someone with whom the president can do business. Coelho, who's on friendly terms with an amazing number of Republicans, has told Clinton as much. He thinks Bill and Newt are, in some ways, two peas in a pod. They both read a lot, know history, are "political animals," dote on policy. "If there's an opportunity to come together the right way, they'll come together very nicely," Coelho says. Gergen worked with Gingrich on the North American Free Trade Agreement and found the congressman forthright—always willing to tell the president when he'd have his support and when he wouldn't. Even Stephanopoulos concedes Gingrich did a "good job" on NAFTA.

Against all odds, Gingrich and Lake have developed a reasonably close relationship. They talk on the phone frequently. Two weeks before the election, Gingrich called to express his desire to stay close on foreign policy in the next two years. Though Gingrich fervently opposed American military intervention in Haiti, he has withheld judgment on the nuclear arms agreement with North Korea, unlike other Republicans. I attribute this restraint to Lake's influence. "I have not seen the technical details ... so I haven't said anything," Gingrich explained on "Face the Nation." For a guy with a hair trigger for sound bites, this was unusual. The real test of cooperation with Gingrich isn't North Korea but GATT, which a lame duck Congress will vote on after Thanksgiving. Gingrich supports the treaty, so long as

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American membership in the World Trade Organization expires after five years. A reservation like that may not be possible in a multilateral pact. But Coelho says Gingrich could be soothed by a provision requiring the United States to "revisit" WTO in five years. We'll see.

No doubt Clinton and Gingrich will now fill the air with happy talk about bipartisanship. The question is whether either means it. Clinton has reason to be leery of Gingrich's pledge of partnership. Gingrich at times has expressed contempt for the president. Once, after Gingrich listed Clinton's faults, he was asked to say something nice about the president. "He'd be a good guy to have a beer with," Gingrich said. "He'd be a great frat president." Still, Clinton trusts Gingrich more than Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. The president blames Dole for denying him a honeymoon in 1993, then playing fast and loose on health care. More important, he knows Dole is running for president and Gingrich isn't. That alone makes Gingrich a candidate for best Republican buddy. •

JORDAN POSTCARD

SMOKE SIGNALS

By Martin Peretz

I crossed the Allenby Bridge from Israel into Jordan with Mike Kinsley, Yo-Yo Ma and two Israeli couples, old friends all, two days after the signing of the peace treaty in the Arava, the desolate desert that makes up so much of these countries' turf. As we set foot on territory that had been so long forbidden to the Israelis, one said, remarking on the brevity of the trip from Jerusalem, "Thirty minutes and nearly fifty years." Another intoned, as if in a blessing, from the opening verse of Psalm 126, "We were like them that dream."

The sense of moment was not only theirs. Though the treaty had five or six days before its provisions went into effect, its spirit was everywhere around us. We experienced it among officials who are trained to be friendly and who knew, in any case, that they had media people on their hands. More important, ordinary people also took the omens of peace as good omens—and as ordinary. I didn't mean to, but I tested this ordinariness: I needed to make a phone call to a friend at the Israeli Defense Ministry and, not being able to reach him, had to impose on several people at several locations to get me through. No one blinked. The problem turned out to be a temporary one at the Tel Aviv end, for you can now call area code 972-3 from area code 962-2 as easily as you call 202 from 310.

Like all the other Arab countries in the neighborhood, Jordan had been in a state of war with Israel since 1948. But the belligerency had, for many years, been little more than an abstraction. The armies cooperated to keep the borders peaceful, which meant particularly cooperating against Palestinian terror. Nonetheless, Egypt was the first country to break away formally from the gang-up, and it got back the entire Sinai for the gesture. The great expectations that followed from the Camp David Accords, however, never materialized. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli tourists—to say nothing of Western Jews—visited Abu Simbel and Luxor, Cairo and Alexandria, but few Egyptians came even to Jerusalem, toward which, we'd been told, the Muslim heart inclines only to Mecca and Medina more. Cultural and scientific contact between the countries is almost nonexistent, and not for want of Israeli trying. What little commerce crosses the border into Egypt is usually disguised. The intellectual class, such as it is, remains nostalgic for the delusions of Gamal Abdel Nasser and sullen about Israel. The clerisy and the masses, like their brethren from Algeria to Iran, are ever more millenarian, and some of them are murderous. Egypt is too absorbed in its own civil wars to ponder the sort of peace it has with the Jews. As long as the annual U.S. lubricant of $3 billion arrives, it is peace enough.

Jordan, too, has its problems. Half its population is composed of Palestinians who came from the west side of the Jordan in two waves: the refugees of 1948 (some pushed out, most not) and the refugees of 1967 (virtually all of whom left on the feet of their own hysteria). For most Palestinians, and especially those who descend from the first wave, any peace with Israel means finally having to admit that the homes they left and the homes they invented in their heads will never be theirs. Of course, by now, there are very few who ever saw Jaffa and Safed. But the secondhand memories they nurtured and that were embellished from generation to generation have lost little of their force, and that force is political. After all, those who dream of old maps without Israel are full-fledged citizens of this country, which is the most democratic of all the Arab states. Jordan was also one of the two places in the Arab world where Palestinians were readily accepted. The other was Lebanon, and what the Palestinians later made out of Lebanon many of them had tried first to make out of Jordan. In 1970 the insurrectionaries and their militias were expelled. But those who stayed remained with their grievances intact. There are still subsidized Palestinians in U.N. refugee camps in Jordan, but they are not there because they are without alternatives. Theirs is a unique dependency: it is not just a psychological habit or an economic scam, but a political statement. Still, most of the Palestinians are in the growing Jordanian middle class, and some are wildly rich. This does not mean that their complaints have been appeased. Despite the clichés, it turns out that personal prosperity is not always accompanied by moderation. For these immoderate Palestinians, even Yasir Arafat is by now a demon. Add Islamic extremism to the

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old rancors of the resident Palestinians and against the longtime Amman-Jerusalem relationship, then, and you will understand just how brave King Hussein has been to try to bring the benefits of real peace to this country.

The benefits are practical. The Nabatean ruins at Petra are everything they've been said to be, and more: man-made magnificence crafted out of natural splendors, less fine than Aswan but far grander. We spent three hours where we should have spent three days. Archaeology is Israel's secular religion, and Petra has been on the Israeli traveler's wish list for decades. Soldiers in acts of daring used to cross the border at daybreak just to show with a Petra photo that they'd been. Tours begin on November 15. But already when we were there I saw three young Israelis, probably carriers of alternate passports, sitting in the shade of a great tomb reading a guide book—in Hebrew. The facilities will be strained once the Israelis arrive, along with those who previously weren't allowed to enter Jordan from Israel. The boys leading the beasts that carry the tourists to the legendary site tell you in excited pidgin English how eagerly they await the day.

Other consequences will be less ambiguous for both parties. The formal treaty will finally give the various "water for peace" plans the attention they deserve. Plans for the first bi-national airport at Aqaba-Eilat and joint work on a maritime basin show how far the monarchy and the Israeli government have come in transcending the old phobias. But attention and plans are only beginnings.

Yitzhak Rabin has risked very little for Israel with this peace. From the existential to the quotidian (the fact that Israeli aircraft, for example, can now fly over Jordan instead of taking detours south over Africa on their way to Asia saves two hours' worth of time and fuel), everything is a plus as calculated in Jerusalem. By contrast, King Hussein lives between Iraq and a hard place, metaphorically and literally. Despite pockets of economic growth, the country is poor. The monarchy itself is not rich. Its stability has surprised everyone. Yet Hussein, whose grandfather was assassinated because he talked peace with the Jews, has actually made peace with them, and he has done so in a particularly controversial way, having broken the taboo against allowing "Arab lands" to remain with Israel, if even only on leasehold. Imagine how this "dangerous" precedent looks to Syria's Hafez al-Assad. The rewards for Jordan for this and other heresies had better be palpable and prompt. This must start with the U.S., particularly in arms and training. But Washington will also have to prod European central banks, to which Amman is indebted, to give Jordan financial relief.

We dined with the Rabins in Jerusalem the night after the signing. Rabin likes Hussein and, when we met Hussein, it was clear that he likes Rabin. Given how dicey the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians now seems, and how mercurial is Arafat's leadership, I wondered aloud whether Israelis don't regret not having pursued more aggressively "the Jordanian option" for an agreement over the West Bank. The answer could be read on Rabin's face. But, of course, it's not the Laborites now in power who should be wistful; they were willing to try everything with Hussein, who, alas, was at the time constrained not to try all that much with the Israelis. Any compromise he made, however tiny, would be cast as treason by Arafat. Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud, however, were not willing to try anything. So it's their second thoughts which are of interest. For, when the Jordanian option withered, the only alternative for a settlement was the PLO. For decades many Israelis thought the PLO did not speak for all Palestinians. They were right. The PLO does not speak for the real moderates. It also does not speak for Hamas, and Hamas speaks for many Palestinians. But Israel won't turn the territories over to Hamas. In an impasse, I wouldn't be startled if some form of the Jordanian option were to become an option again.

Hussein can entertain no such thoughts, and he didn't as we sat looking out at the Red Sea. He has none of the pretensions we assume to be royal. Exquisitely polite to his men and women visitors, he addressed every man as "sir." It's a strange experience to be called "sir" by a monarch. All of us, however, had trouble saying "Your Majesty." He had no trouble with our trouble. The king was dressed in slacks and shirt. We were overdressed, not grasping that "informal" might really mean informal. He is a heavy smoker. The king did confirm a story told us by Rabin, also a heavy smoker. When the two leaders met at the White House late this summer they were forbidden, by administration edict, to smoke. When Clinton came to the Arava he was in Rabin's and Hussein's domain. And the host leaders smoked, making a point to the president about their cigarette deprivation in Washington.

The king reminded us that this peace, encouraged and supported by the United States, was an achievement of the Israelis and the Jordanians themselves. He was being modest. It is his achievement, and Rabin's. Queen Noor brought up a hostile article about her that TNR had run some years ago. Kinsley and I each remembered that the other was responsible for its publication. Princess Ghida, the wife of one of the king's nephews, my friend Prince Talal, was frank and tough in her criticisms of the magazine and some of its writers. They were our hosts, all of them very gracious hosts, but they were not letting us off easy. I said that beyond ideology and beyond market models, the world was divided into two kinds of countries: those in which citizens and subjects go to sleep without worrying about a dread pounding on the door by the political police; and those in which people go to sleep worrying precisely about such a dread knock. Jordan is among the first group, I said, and it would be reason enough for America to be its friend. But there are more reasons, only the last of which being that it has made peace with its adversary.

Talal stuck to the politics of the day. And to music. Yo-Yo Ma played Bach's first cello suite. And Ernst Bloch's "A Prayer." No one thought that, in this setting and at that moment, it was anything other than a prayer for peace. •

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Why people think Clinton raised their taxes.

MONEY TALKS

By Michael Kinsley

> Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property....
> —Marx and Engels

Polls show that about two-thirds of Americans believe Bill Clinton has raised their taxes. In fact, the Clinton budget deal of 1993—the only tax legislation of his presidency—raised income taxes on just 1.2 percent of American taxpayers, or about 1.4 million filers, and *lowered* income taxes—through expansion of the earned income tax credit—on 13 percent, or about 15 million. To be sure, there was a trivial increase in America's laughably low gasoline tax: 4.7 cents a gallon, an amount swallowed up in the regular fluctuations of gas prices. And the share of Social Security payments subject to tax, for certain filers, was raised from half to 85 percent. But even if you regard this last item as a tax increase and not a benefit reduction, it hit only a small fraction of the population—not the vast majority who blame Bill Clinton for raising their taxes.

On the last Saturday before the election, Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole urged voters, in a national radio address, to "help Republicans pull the plug on President Clinton's big government, big taxing, big spending machine." (At the same time, Dole accused Clinton of planning cuts in Social Security and Medicare.) This kind of rhetorical thrust was clearly effective for the Republicans, but it is not accurate.

The best measure of the overall tax burden is taxes as a share of gross domestic product (GDP), which represents the size of the total economy. Federal taxes took just more than 20 percent of GDP when Ronald Reagan assumed office in 1981, and just less than 20 percent when he left office in 1989. That was the Reagan Revolution. George Bush, despite his vilification as violator of the "no new taxes" pledge, actually did better than Reagan: he nudged that figure down to just less than 19 percent. And Bill Clinton? Clinton is averaging 19 percent on the nose: less than Reagan, about the same as Bush.

As for spending, federal government spending took 22 percent of GDP when Reagan entered office, and the exact same 22 percent when he left. Bush, primarily because of the recession, notched that figure up to 24 percent. Under Clinton, federal spending will dip *below* 22 percent—Reagan's level—this fiscal year, and is projected to stay there for the next several years. (The defense build-down is part, but only part, of the explanation.)

The widespread public misperception about spending and—especially—taxes helps to explain the puzzle of President Clinton's unpopularity. No doubt his own personal and political failings play a role, as do the skill and viciousness of the Republican opposition. But if most people are nursing the impression that their taxes have gone up (with no resulting benefit), when in fact they haven't gone up, and have even gone down in many cases, that also must be part of the explanation.

The remaining puzzle, of course, is: What explains the widespread public misperception—or "false consciousness," as Marx liked to call this sort of thing? The crude but unavoidable answer is that the 1.4 million whose taxes went up are a lot more influential in our political system than the 15 million whose taxes went down. The "Clinton tax increase" hit people with family incomes over about $185,000 a year. This may be just a tiny fraction of the general population, but it covers almost everybody in the opinion-forming elite. That group includes not just the upper reaches of Washington journalism. It includes Jay Leno and David Letterman. It includes Rush Limbaugh—who starts every day's radio program with a denunciation of the 1993 budget, which he calls "the raw deal." It includes T.V. anchors and newspaper publishers.

It also includes people who affect the political debate indirectly, such as top corporate executives. Clinton's program has been good for the economy generally, and good for big corporations in particular. (His health care plan, for example, would have relieved them of billions of dollars of costs for retirees.) Yet the CEO world is overwhelmingly hostile, and reflects that hostility in political action committee contributions, lobbying campaigns, comments to the press and so on. Why? Reflexive Republicanism is part of the answer. But part is that tax increase. Clinton has been good for their corporate balance sheets, but bad for their personal ones.

I am not claiming a conscious conspiracy among the affluent to deceive the rest of the population. "False consciousness" affects them as well. In the worlds where they spend their days, almost everyone *has* suffered a tax increase, and it is easy enough to forget how small these worlds are. But the so-called Clinton tax increase is a dramatic illustration of how these elites set the agenda of American politics—even in a period of alleged rampant "populism."

Indeed, the phenomenon predates Clinton. Throughout the whole tax-obsessed political era since 1980, the total burden of federal taxes on society as a whole has remained remarkably constant, at about 19 to 20 percent of GDP. But the distribution of that burden has shifted back and forth—and the public perception about these shifts is always the exact opposite of the truth. During the Reagan period, taxes on the middle class actually went up (mainly because of relentless increases in the Social Security tax), while taxes on the affluent (measured as a share of their incomes) went down. Result: in the popular mind, this is thought of as a time of tax cuts. George Bush actually lowered the total tax take slightly, but he did raise the top bracket. Result:

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he is doomed to be thought of as a tax-raiser. Clinton shifted the burden even more dramatically onto the affluent—and remember, the *total* tax burden has remained the same, so the middle class is paying a bit less. And yet Clinton is overwhelmingly perceived as having socked it to the middle class.

In raising taxes on the affluent, Clinton was fulfilling, not betraying, a campaign promise. This also has been largely forgotten. Clinton quite clearly campaigned on a platform of raising top-bracket tax rates as way of reducing the deficit. What's more, this campaign plank was extremely popular at the time. True, he also promised a middle-class tax cut, which he hasn't produced. But the tax hike on the affluent was popular, whether justly or not, for its own sake. Not just popular, but *populist.* Indeed, Bill Clinton's upper-income tax increase stands as the single most "populist" policy actually enacted in recent years.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Yet the populace, which once was for it, has turned against it. Why? Perhaps this is because people have suddenly been persuaded by the philosophy of *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page, that higher taxes on the affluent throttle the economy and impoverish us all. But that seems unlikely, since the predictions of economic disaster from the Clinton program have rather dramatically failed to come true, at least so far. A more likely explanation is that people have forgotten who, exactly, got stuck with the new taxes.

The explosive effect of raising taxes on a small but influential minority may help to explain another mystery about Clinton's unpopularity, or at least it is a mystery to me. Why is he so widely perceived as "left-wing"? He campaigned from the middle but governs from the left; he pretended to be a "New Democrat" but stands revealed as an "old-fashioned big-government liberal"; and so on. That's the accusation. Yet the usual bill of particulars is thin. As noted above, the government, as a share of the economy, is actually smaller, not bigger, than under Clinton's two predecessors. So is the number of federal employees. True, Clinton was thwarted in efforts to create a few new government programs. But, except for health care, these were small potatoes. Yes, there have been a few cultural-left appointees, such as Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders. But these are sideshows: a gift to right-wing direct-mail operatives, but hardly central to the administration, or to the lives of most Americans.

Joe Klein of *Newsweek*, who strikes this chord in almost every column, summarizes thus in the October 31 issue: "[E]ver since the administration began ... the president tacked left on issues like gays in the military and health care." But if those are his two best examples, the case is weak. Ending discrimination against gays in the armed forces was something Clinton forthrightly pledged to do during the campaign. There was no surprise. Even so, on taking office he tried to put off a decision. It was the opposition, sensing an opportunity, that forced this rather minor issue to the top of the agenda at the start of his administration. And in the end, he did exactly what his Clinton-the-leftist critics accuse him of *not* doing: he compromised. In fact, by the lights of gay rights activists, he caved in completely.

As for health care, the standard "old-fashioned big-government" solution is a Canadian-style single-payer system. This has many supporters, but Clinton was never one of them. Clinton's proposal, whatever its merits or demerits, was precisely a "neoliberal" mishmash of government and market incentives. Yes, certainly, it was an ambitious attempt to remake an entire sector of the economy. But once again, this was what he promised during the campaign, and what people seemed to want. If they changed their minds upon seeing the details, fine. But it is simply inaccurate to say that Clinton promised a moderate reform and produced a radical-left one.

There is, though, one unarguably left-wing thing Clinton has done, and that is to raise top-bracket tax rates. Yet this gets omitted from most "Clinton-the-leftist"

continued on page 24

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indictments, or misrepresented as a general tax increase. Could the reason be that this "left-wing" action might actually be popular?

Ironically, the affluent as a class are the only ones who have benefited, so far, from the Clinton economic boom. As many have noted, technological advances and expanding world trade are increasing income inequality even as they increase our total prosperity. This is a long-term trend for which Clinton deserves neither blame nor credit. But the ingratitude of the affluent is striking when, even after the tax shift, they are doing better than the rest of the population. The role of a tax increase on such a small fraction of the population in poisoning the whole political debate is surprising, too. Though I suppose Marx might not have been surprised. •

An idea whose time has gone.

AGAINST IDENTITY

By Leon Wieseltier

Every culture has its preferred description of the human distinction. These descriptions are analytical and homiletical. We call ourselves not only what we are, but also what we seek to be. This is stirring, but it is also corrupting. It allows us to see the one in the other, to mistake what we aspire to be for what we are. A good rule of thumb is: we are never already what we should be.

In our culture, the preferred descriptions have included: the soul, the nous (and other appellations for the mind), the self, the ego, the person. In our time, the preferred description is: identity. In America, but not only in America, we are choking on identity. And not only on the identity of others; we are choking also on the identity of our own. What if the disgruntlement of America is owed to something deeper than reading lists and admissions policies and schemes of preferment? What if we are presenting ourselves to each other, and to ourselves, in a manner that simplifies, and distorts, and provokes? What if we are preferring a coarse and troublesome description?

"I seize the word *identity*," wrote Robert Penn Warren in 1965, "It is a key word. You hear it over and over again." A few years earlier there appeared a book that portrayed the United States as *The Identity Society*. Identity, according to Erik Erikson, writing in the 1950s, is "vague," "ambiguous," "unfathomable," "colloquial," "naïve," "all-pervasive." Identity was certainly one of the most repercussive contributions of the social sciences to American culture. But what was it? For many intellectuals in post-war America, identity was what alienation was not. For Erikson, it was a slogan for the end of childhood, for the crucible of adolescence, for the success of socialization. Identity smelled like teen spirit. (The crucible of adolescence: that is an example of Eriksonian sentimentality.) Finally Erikson's influence on the American obsession with identity was less a theory than a mood. He made identity into a romance.

The idea of identity originates, of course, in logic. A = A. This is an assertion of sameness and an assertion of difference. An object is the same as all the objects that are like itself, and it is different from all the objects that are not like itself. Now consider an analogy between the logical relation and the social relation. A = A. The question, What is your identity?, is really the question, Who are you like? Identity, in other words, is a euphemism for conformity. It announces a desire to be subsumed, an eagerness to be known primarily by a common characteristic. I say primarily, since identity need not be perfect to be strong. Logicians talk of "identity in difference." Objects that are the same with respect to one criterion of identity may be different with respect to another criterion of identity. And it is never the case, even with simple objects, that there is a single criterion of identity. The ascription of identity, then, is the consequence of a choice among the criteria of identity. We have many likenesses, but we do not reward them all with significance.

A = A. This is also a way of saying that A ≠ B. Which might bruise B. There is solace, to be sure. It is that B = B. But this is also a way of saying that B ≠ A. Which might bruise A. Identity is very social, but it is not very sociable. For the definition of the individual that it provides is not least a negative definition, a definition not only in terms of what one is, but also in terms of what one is not; and such a definition of the same will often be experienced by the other as a rejection. Identity is an insulation; a doctrine of aversion; an exaltation of

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impassability. The bad news (and for democrats, the good news) is that the insulation is never adequate. The borders are permeable, and strange gods slip across.

Identity is not to be mistaken for individuality. Individuality is ancient, identity is modern. In his last essay, in 1938, Marcel Mauss observed: "It is plain that there has never existed a human being who has not been aware, not only of his body, but also at the same time of his individuality, both spiritual and physical." It is more plausible to think of identity as the solution to the problem of individuality.

It is never long before identity is reduced to loyalty.

An affiliation is not an experience. It is, in fact, a surrogate for experience. Where the faith in God is wanting, there is still religious identity. Where the bed is cold and empty, there is still sexual identity. Where the words of the fathers are forgotten, there is still ethnic identity. The thinner the identity, the louder.

The hardest thing in America is to be what one is softly.

Private identity is an oxymoron. Identity is public; it is how one is known. Secret identity, by contrast, is entirely possible. It is not a reflection of inward realities, but of outward realities. Secret identity is a stratagem for survival, the characteristic improvisation of a minority in danger. It has a long, bleak past. The history of the Jews is replete with instances of desperate and dignified self-concealment, most dramatically in fifteenth-century Spain, and so is the history of homosexuality. (For all the African American anxiety about "passing," it is one of the defining hardships of this minority that its identity cannot be hidden.)

Identity in bad times is not like identity in good times. The vigorous expression of identity in the face of oppression is not an exercise of narcissism, it is an exercise of heroism. And those qualities of identity that seem vexing in good times—the soldierliness and the obsession with solidarity, the renunciation of individual development in the name of collective development, the reliance on symbolic action, the belief in the cruelty of the world and the eternity of struggle—are precisely the qualities that provide the social and psychological foundations for resistance. For this reason, it is impertinent to address the criticism of identity to those whose existence is threatened. Still, justice sometimes comes. And when it comes, it is sometimes bewildering, because it proposes peace to selves that have been arranged for war. The identity that altered history yesterday is redundant today. The outer discontinuity demands an inner discontinuity, which is wrenching. Unless a rupture of identity is accomplished, there will be justice, but there will not be peace.

Identity is too eager to commemorate itself. (Or is this just Jewish identity?)

Who are you? Even when you know the answer, it is not an easy question.

The spell of identity is not difficult to comprehend. Hume's nightmare, we might call our situation. With his pained discussion of personal identity, Hume ended his quest for "the uninterrupted and invariable object." He failed to find it. He found instead that "the mind is a kind of theatre.... Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions. Our thought is still more variable than our sight; and all our other senses and faculties contribute to this change; nor is there any single power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment." There was nothing steady, nothing firm, nothing solid; only associations and patterns of associations. Hume's pages were written in a tone of affable despair. And this was two centuries before our bacchanal of associations! The stimulations have never been faster or fiercer than they are today. The technology of information from which we prosper, and from which we suffer, makes the clutter that perplexed Hume look like order, and his mind's theater look like a place of repose. We are unprecedentedly dispersed and unprecedentedly distracted. Hume took some comfort from the operation of memory, which confers a sense of continuity; but memory in the modern world is disappearing beneath the assault of associations. We are carrying too much. We are falling out of our hands. We need a basket. The name of the basket is identity.

We have a craving for specificity, but we love also to sneak away from specificity. We want to be one thing, but not any longer this one thing or again that one thing. We have a fear of being nothing and a fantasy of being everything, but we do not see that everything is a busy version of nothing. So one cheer for identity: it imposes discipline. It is the enemy of "the protean self."

A proponent of "the protean self" praises it for its "radical fluidity, functional wisdom and a quest for at least minimal form," which is the appropriate response to "the flux of our time." "The protean self," says Robert Jay Lifton, is characterized by "serial equipoise" and "rolling configurations." It "can transcend time and space—to contain simultaneously elements from highly divergent historical periods and equally divergent geographical and cultural places. The protean self need not be just here or there but can be here *and* there...." And so on. Lifton is right that the self is resilient; but surely resilience is the antithesis of malleability. To change is to survive, but it is not to resist. And "here *and* there" is not an easy trick. There is a difference between living doubly and living promiscuously. The "protean self" is the promiscuous self, the suave and shallow self, the self that adopts the standpoint of the consumer as an ideal of life, the self that views tragedy as a variety of stress, the self that stands in dread of silence. Lifton has provided the psychology of post-modernism. (And Clintonism.) Proteus, remember, was not resilient, he was slippery.

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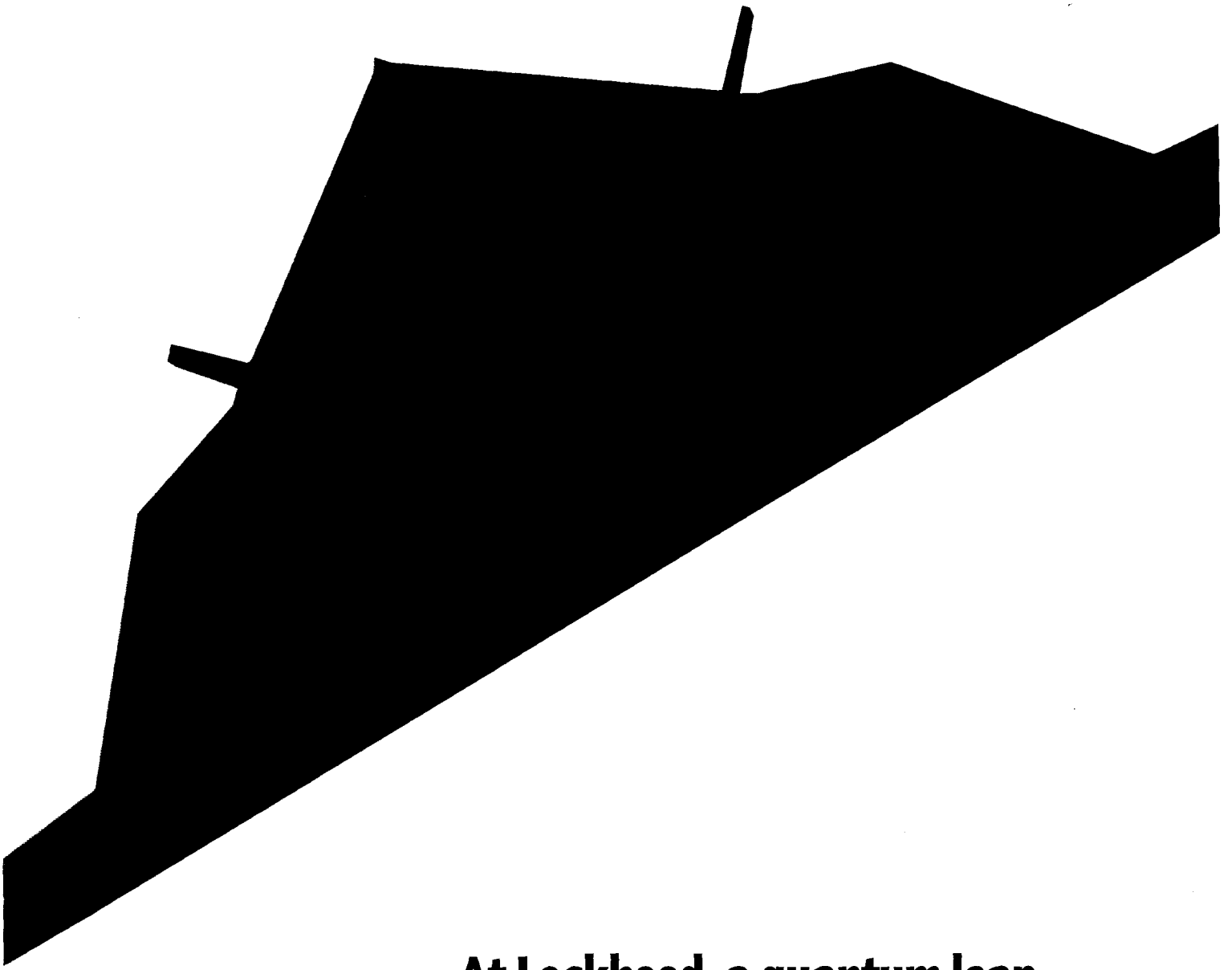

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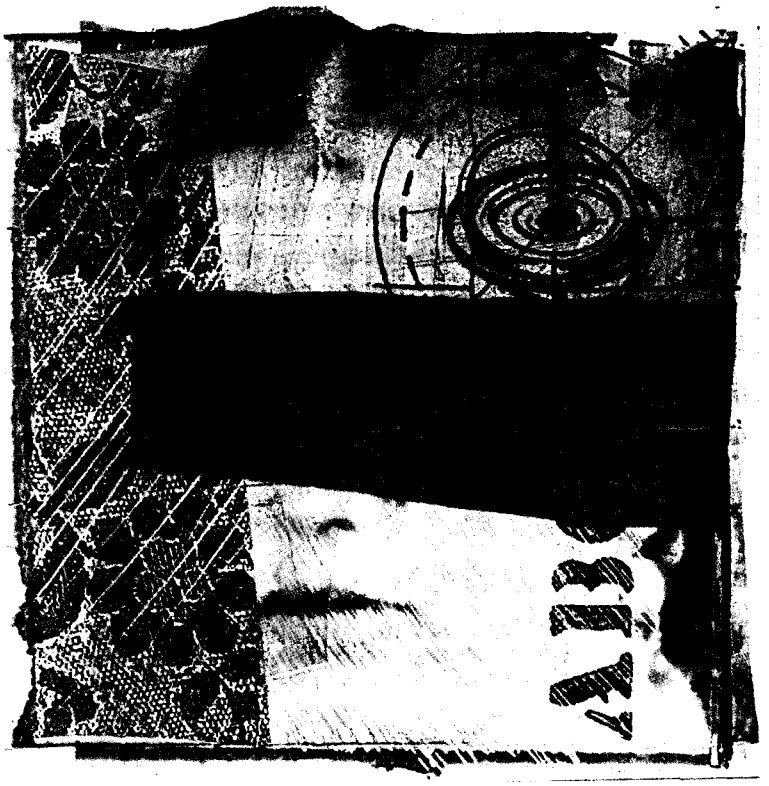
He had an objective in transforming himself into a lion and a serpent and a boar and a tree, but it was not the cultivation of his personality. He assumed his shapes in order to escape answering Menelaos's questions. He was, in sum, a dodger: a fine post-modern god of the sea. Identity, at least, is prepared to take questions.

Every inheritance is an accident. This is what religious, sexual and ethnic identity is designed to make one forget. For a feeling of contingency, it substitutes a feeling of necessity. But it is not necessary to be necessary, if one is ready for work. There is no shame in being accidental. I am not ashamed that I might not have been a man or a Jew. Indeed, the consciousness that I might not have been a man or a Jew prepares me with a patience for the many things that I might have been. A feeling of contingency is a useful impediment to vanity. Anyway, it is possible to be proud of one's luck: not as one is proud of what one has made, but as one is proud of what one has understood.



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Identity is toasty. It imparts a feeling of the inside; but this feeling is imparted to us from the outside. The inside and the outside should be correctly mapped. The outside is vast. The country to which I belong is outside. The people to which I belong is outside. The family to which I belong is outside. Inside, there is only my body and my soul. From the beginning, I recognize this family as my family and this people as my people and this country as my country; but not in the way that I recognize this body as my body and this soul as my soul. I am not estranged from my family and my people and my country, but neither are we the same. I must bring them from the outside in, if I am to love them for a reason greater than circumstance. Circumstance is a poor reason for love.

Identity thrives on facts: you are the child of this woman and this man, this neighborhood, this town, this people, this faith, this country. But there is one fact to which identity is oblivious, and that is the fact of individuation: you are nobody else and nobody else is you. And there is no sharper experience of facticity than the experience of individuation, from which the only release is sleep.

It is not fair to attack the group for failing to banish loneliness. But it is also not fair for the group to promise that it will banish loneliness.

In one of his discourses Kierkegaard says that it is easier for somebody who is not a Christian to become a Christian than it is for somebody who is a Christian to become a Christian. I am always at a disadvantage toward my own tradition. I am not only quickened by my intimacy with what I have been given, I am also dulled by it. I lack the wakefulness of the stranger. I should conduct myself toward the tradition to which I have fallen heir like an actor who has played a scene poorly: I should go out and come in again.

To know that a thing is yours is to know little about it.

There is the excitement of discovering one's own, but there is also the excitement of discovering one's difference with one's own. The study of medieval Hebrew texts taught me this. So many of them were so profoundly unfamiliar to me. I experienced the shock of a lack of recognition. In order to understand many of these peculiar, vivacious, turgid and beautiful documents, I had to learn to imagine Jews. I acquired this skill by leaving my "Jewish identity" at the door of the seminar room. For it is an axiom of that identity that a Jew is a Jew is a Jew; but the study of history showed that this axiom was a necessary fiction. We were not only one thing, we were also many things. The complication was delicious. Here was diversity, but on the inside. As a boy, I had been taught that it was my duty to choose Jewishness, and I have always warmed to the choice; but I was thrilled to understand that it was my duty also to choose among Jewishnesses. This made the tradition vital. And so I set out to gain the knowledge that would be required for the judgment of my own patrimonies. A few years later, in the same room on the top floor of the library, I read this sentence in a story by Hawthorne: "Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors; and let each successive generation thank him, not less fervently, for being one step further from them in the march of ages."

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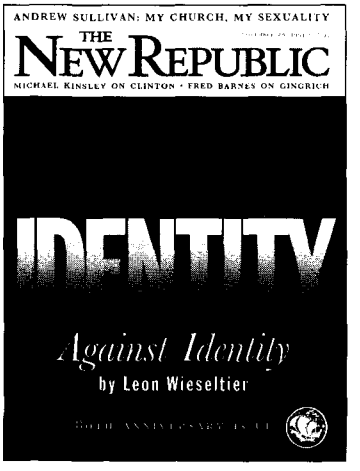
ANDREW SULLIVAN: MY CHURCH, MY SEXUALITY
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IDENTITY
Against Identity
by Leon Wieseltier

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It is important to distinguish between identifying oneself and justifying oneself. Identity in America is so fitful and so flexible not least because it is so often cobbled together for the purpose of self-justification; and this constant clamor for self-justification is a drain on American dignity. One must defend oneself, of course, if one is attacked for being a black or a homosexual or a woman or a Jew or a Catholic, but one must dream of being more than a defender of oneself. To assert your right to be something is not yet to be something.

The lure of identity is the lure of wholeness. It proposes to bind up the parts and the pieces of a life and transform them into a unity, into a life that adds up. This provides a mixture of psychological and aesthetic satisfaction. But is there really nothing worse than a life that does not add up? Surely the life that does add up is the easeful one. Erikson was right to remark that "an increasing sense of identity ... is experienced as a sense of psychosocial well-being," but he was making a damning admission.

The desire for wholeness is indistinguishable from the desire for death. Only religion is candid enough to say so.

In the modern world, the cruelest thing that you can do to people is to make them ashamed of their complexity.

A life that does not add up is not a life of irony. Quite the contrary. Its accomplishment is to contain within itself many things that do not go together, all of them unironically. Irony used to have an aspect of courage, in an age in which inconsistency was an occasion for pain. But this is an age in which inconsistency is an occasion for pleasure. (The name of that pleasure is postmodernism.) And so the aspect of courage is to be sought in literalness, in taking words and ideas and things for what they are and following them far.

Two cheers for identity: it is the enemy of irony.

I hear it said of somebody that he is leading a double life. I think to myself: Just two?

In America, the tribunes of identity are the tribunes of diversity, but the joke is on them. Their ends are contradictory. Diversity means complexity. Identity means simplicity. Anybody who takes diversity seriously will see that identity is an illusion. The multiculturalists will reply that there is no contradiction, that America is a complex society of differently simplified individuals, a multicultural society of monocultural people. But they misunderstand America. The American achievement is not the multicultural society, it is the multicultural individual. And the multicultural individual is what the tribalists and the traditionalists (they are not always the same people) fear. Identity is a promise of singleness, but this is a false promise. Many things are possible in America, but the singleness of identity is not one of them.

Not: my identity, but: my identities. There is a greater truth in the plural. There is also a greater likelihood of decency. The multicultural individual is a figure of moral friction. In such an individual, the mocker, and the hater, and the killer, may hit a bump.

For Erikson, "identity formation begins where the usefulness of multiple identification ends." But the usefulness of multiple identification never ends.

The absence of coherence is not yet incoherence.

On what grounds does one accept one's identity? If the grounds are internal, then one's identity is weak. If the grounds are external, then one's identity is strong—but then there is a principle in the world more powerful than identity, to which we must all appeal.

The fervor with which a proposition is believed tells nothing about its truth. Except for its practical consequences, passion is beside the point.

The multiculturalists are Herder's children. (The Afrocentrists especially.) They have created a cult of incommensurability. But if the differences between individuals and groups were as thick as the multiculturalists think, then not even multiculturalism would be possible. Everybody would be shut up in subjectivity. There would be only total silence or total war.

Misunderstanding, prejudice, conflict: they are all twisted tributes to the possibility of objectivity. They occur on, and mar, a common ground. That is why they can be corrected, refuted and resolved.

The secret of universalism is that it works.

If I cannot explain myself to people who are not like me, I lose my pleasure in explaining myself to people who are like me.

There is no point in leading the others to what you cherish, if you believe that they cannot follow you. Pride in one's difference makes no sense if differences are blinding, and the others cannot see.

"The reason why all water is said to be specifically the same as all other water is because of a certain likeness it bears to it, and the only difference in the case of water drawn from the same spring is this, that the likeness is more emphatic." This, from Aristotle's discussion of sameness in *Topics*, I, 19-22. What a beautiful expression of tolerance, for the universal and the particular. Unfortunately, you cannot make a politics out of a metaphor.

Authenticity is a paltry standard by which to appraise an idea or a work of art or a politics. Authenticity is a measure of provenance, and provenance has nothing to do

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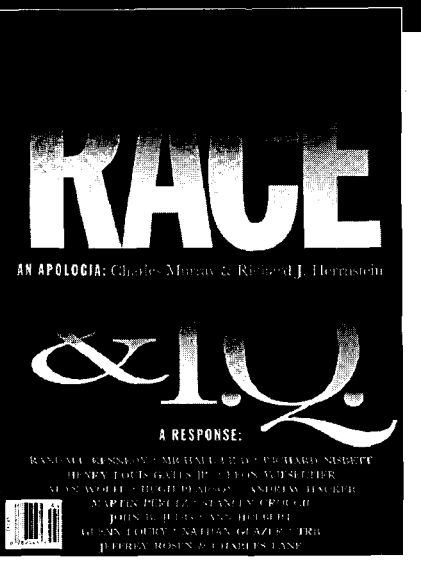

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with substance. An idea may be ours and still be false. A work of art may be ours and still be ugly. A politics may be ours and still be evil.

Authenticity is a reactionary ideal. And speaking strictly, it is an anti-ideal. It says: what has been is what must be. It is the idolatry of origins.

A = A. Big deal.

In the discussion of multiculturalism, there has been a good deal of indignation about the relativism among traditions; but there is also the relativism within traditions. The latter is a consequence of multiculturalism that has not been sufficiently noted. When an expression is judged for its authenticity, distinctions of value inside a tradition collapse. I have observed this in the American Jewish community, where food and philosophy are sometimes appreciated almost in the same spirit, since they are both Jewish expressions, and so they fill the same need. Not in the same individuals, of course, but in the same group, which is what counts. But Maimonides is not like a bowl of soup. Maimonides was one of the most extraordinary minds in the history of human thought. Those Jews who kindle to *The Guide of the Perplexed* because it is the work of a Jew are not wrong, but they are impoverished; they rob themselves of the exquisite satisfaction of coming upon something of universal importance in one's own midst.

I sit in my room, a white man, and listen to *East St. Louis Toodle-oo* and *Lull at Dawn* and *Things Ain't What They Used to Be* and *Blood Count.* I am certain that I do not hear these pieces the way a black man hears them. But I am also certain that I hear them rightly, that I hear them as music. If you prize Ellington for the reason that he was a black man, you do not have to listen to him. You would prize him just as ardently if you were deaf.

"I love it because it is mine." This is the language of identity. Properly translated, this means: I do not love it, I love me.

You can change your religion but you cannot change your grandfather, said a nineteenth-century German Jewish liberal, who changed his religion. This pronouncement repels me. It is cheap, in the way that identity can be cheap. It expects the fathers to do the work of the sons. This man disgraced his grandfather and then counted on his grandfather to save him from disgrace. The finality of one's origins should not secure one against the judgment of one's actions. Also, it should be harder to change your religion than your grandfather.

It is a part of the glamour of identity that it is received. Otherwise one could not enjoy the sensation of being a link in the chain of transmission. But this passivity is partly a conceit. Worldviews are not only given, they are also made. In recent years historians have written extensively about "the invention of tradition," some of them a little too breathlessly. It is not exactly news that people put things into their past and then claim that they found them there. Still, the historians have a point. Identity has a role for the receptive attitude, but it is not the receptive attitude by which traditions grow. A tradition that is transmitted more or less as it is received will not live long.

What is made should be celebrated as much as what is given, not least because it is made out of what is given.

Perhaps identity is a kind of realism about human affairs. Perhaps the alternative to identity is a preposterous Nietzscheanism, according to which we must, as we brush our teeth in the morning, start all over again and devise the foundations of our world. Who, really, is like that? (Not Richard Rorty.) But this is an unacceptable choice. The world is not completely stable and it is not completely unstable. The same is true of the self. The uninflected life of identity asks too little; but the inflection of identity is not an insignificant thing. It should be honored. And a blessing on the ones who begin at the beginning.

Identity is a fixative, and it works on the elements of a life the way a fixative works on the elements of a drawing: it holds them together and it helps them to withstand the light.

Erikson drew a distinction between the notion of wholeness and the notion of totality. "To say it in one sentence: when the human being, because of accidental or developmental shifts, loses an essential wholeness, he restructures himself and the world by taking recourse to what we may call totalism." This was written in 1954, when the analysis of totalitarianism was in full swing. Identity, in Erikson's view, allowed for the realization of "a much-desired wholeness"; but totalitarianism was an inhibition of identity, for which it substituted regressive formations of totality. From the standpoint of politics, however, Erikson's distinction between wholeness and totality is trivial. Seek wholeness and you will likely find totality. The hunger for wholeness always plays into the hands of the hunger for totality. The monsters of modern history, in other words, had a use for identity. Before the identity politics of the 1980s and 1990s, there was the identity politics of the 1930s and 1940s. Sarajevo is the capital of this continuity. The city teaches that the relationship between identity and morality may be a crushing one.

Wholeness is unreflective, but totality is clever.

Identity will always look suspiciously on selflessness. But selflessness does not mean that you do not know yourself. It means that you have been drawn out of yourself. It is the self-denial of the strong.

Purity is the opposite of integrity.

Only one in possession of an identity would understand why one would wish to be rid of it. •

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FEMINISTS, MEET MR. DARWIN

By Robert Wright

History has not been kind to ideologies that rested on patently false beliefs about human nature. Communism, for example, isn't looking very robust these days. From the beginning communists held that human selfishness, the great crippler of communal utopias, was eradicable. They shaped scientific theory accordingly. Marx insisted that traits acquired through education—a more generous disposition, say—were biologically inherited by offspring. Up until 1964, long after Western geneticists had dismissed this idea, it was still an official doctrine of Soviet biology. Occasionally Soviet geneticists who failed to appreciate the doctrine were sent to prison.

It would be melodramatic to say that today feminism is where communism was at midcentury. Still, it's tempting. Once again an ideology clings to a doctrine that, for better or worse, isn't true—in this case the idea that "gender" is essentially a "construct": that male and female nature are inherently more or less identical. Once again, the falseness of the doctrine is increasingly evident. And, once again, adherents of the ideology can admit this falseness only at some risk—not imprisonment, maybe, but an extremely chilly reception from fellow feminists.

Of course, there are the much-discussed "difference feminists." But even they don't believe—or, at least, don't admit to believing—that men and women are *inherently* different. They either stay silent on the question of where the differences come from or trace them to early social influences.

There has been much talk about the fragmentation of modern feminism. In addition to the difference feminists (e.g., psychologist Carol Gilligan, linguist Deborah Tannen), there are the "radical feminists" (e.g., Catharine MacKinnon, Andrea Dworkin), the liberal "equity feminists" (e.g., Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, writer Katha Pollitt) and assorted others. But as diverse as these thinkers seem, they are bound by a common thread: none is interested in the well-grounded study of human nature, of the male and female minds.

By "well-grounded study of human nature" I don't *just* mean, "grounded the way I think the study of human nature should be grounded" (although I do, of course, mean that). I mean grounded in comprehension of the process that designed human beings: natural selection. Specifically, the field of inquiry that I commend to feminists, and that they seem loath to explore, is a science called evolutionary psychology. Evolutionary psychology sees (among other things) some clear differences between the male and female minds. These differences aren't wholly immutable. The difference feminists are right to sense that culture matters; we are a pretty plastic species. Still, many of the differences between men and women are more stubborn than most feminists would like, and complicate the quest for—even the definition of—social equality between the sexes.

The feminist aversion to the Darwinian study of difference has as much to do with Darwinism as with difference. Traditionally, after all, Darwinism has been most potently wielded by the right wing. Feminists fear that it will again be used to justify oppression as "natural," as "in our genes," as beyond our control. That's certainly a danger, but it's not inevitable. And besides, it's not necessarily worse than the alternative danger: that feminism, like communism, will falter under the weight of its doctrinal absurdities; and that the laudable ideals it started with, rather than reaching a gritty compromise with reality, will begin to wither for lack of honest support.

It would be misleading to say that feminists casually disregard Darwinism. A fair amount of effort goes into the disregard. A few feminists have actually studied and then dismissed the Darwinian view of human nature. Unfortunately, they seem to have expended more energy on the dismissal than on the study.

A typical dismissal begins by mocking Darwin's observation that in species after species, "the differences between the sexes follow almost exactly the same rules; the males are almost always the wooers...." The female, "with the rarest exception, is less eager than the male.... [S]he is coy....The exertion of some choice on the part of the female seems almost as general a law as the eagerness of the male." This is a vital observation, for the evolutionary logic behind it (which wasn't grasped until a century after Darwin) underlies many psychological differences between men and women.

Darwin's observation has been ridiculed by Carol Tavris in her much-praised (by feminists) book *The Mis-*

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measure of Woman. Tavris calls it the "myth of the coy female." The pattern Darwin thought he saw, she asserts, isn't really there. We can no longer explain sex roles by "appealing to the universality of such behavior in other species" because "other species aren't cooperating."

Actually, they are. To be sure, there are many species whose females are less than devoutly monogamous. There are even species whose females are as sexually assertive as males, or more so. What Tavris doesn't seem to appreciate is how all this variety can specifically reinforce our belief that the general rule of *relative* female sexual reserve has a genetic basis.

To see this crucial point, you have to first see the modern Darwinian explanation for that reserve. A female can reproduce much less often than a male, because she is stuck with the time-sapping job of birthing and maybe even rearing the young. Thus it makes Darwinian sense for her to appraise carefully the quality of aspiring mates—both their genetic quality and, in species with "high male parental investment," like ours, their ability and willingness to help provide for the young after birth. This quality control helps keep the female from wasting one of her rare and arduous reproductive episodes creating offspring with poor survival prospects. (A woman needn't think about these things; rather, her genetically based impulses of attraction have been shaped by this logic over millions of years; genes encouraging selectivity have flourished, while genes allowing females to squander precious reproductive episodes have not.)

For a male, in contrast, reproduction can be a frequent and low-cost affair; the more sex partners, the more chances to get genes into the next generation. Hence the massively documented fact that males in our species, when sizing up sheerly *sexual* (not marital) opportunities, are on average less choosy than females. (Among the documentation are male and female tastes in pornography and prostitution, as well as the oft-noted fact that gay males are on average more promiscuous than gay females; both homosexual cultures are a de facto experiment in how one sex behaves when it doesn't have to compromise with the other.)

Now, as it happens, in a few eccentric "sex-reversed" species the *males* assume much of the burden of giving birth. Male sea horses have an incubation pouch in which the female deposits the eggs. Male phalaropes (sea snipes) sit in the nest and incubate the eggs, taking themselves out of commission and leaving their mates free to embark on another round of reproduction. And these are the species in which stereotypes of courtship behavior most reliably break down; female sea horses and phalaropes are quite sexually assertive. Thus these ostensible "exceptions" to Darwinian logic in fact comply with and bolster it. They are yet more evidence that the sex that can reproduce more often will typically be the randier sex. They are yet more reason to believe that *human* females, whose reproductive episodes are rare and arduous, are indeed genetically inclined to be more discriminating about sex partners than human males are.

The feminist Anne Fausto-Sterling, author of *Myths of Gender*, is thus missing the point by 180 degrees when she cites the phalaropes, with their reversed sex roles, and says sarcastically, "You name your animal species and make your political point." You name your animal species and it complies with evolutionary theory. Politics will have to adjust accordingly.

It turns out that females in our species are *not*, by nature, utterly coy or utterly monogamous. There is physiological evidence that they are "naturally" prone to promiscuity and infidelity under some circumstances. But they are not nearly so prone as males. More to the point: figuring out how naturally adventurous women are, and *why*, has depended on careful study of various species whose females, for various reasons, don't precisely fit the coy stereotype. (Some of the pioneering work was done by the anthropologist Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, author of *The Woman That Never Evolved.*)

So, while Tavris is in one sense right to say the "myth of the coy female" is dead, she is exactly wrong to imply that this means women aren't by nature more sexually reserved than men, or that recent zoology has sapped confidence in the Darwinian comprehension of the human mind. For Tavris and Fausto-Sterling to note that the crudest stereotypes about human sex roles aren't found throughout the animal kingdom, and then end the discussion there, is to get a C- in Evolutionary Biology 101. And these are the two most commonly cited feminist "experts" on Darwinism.

I cannot, in the space of this article, try to convince skeptics that men are "naturally" less discriminating about sex partners than women—or that men and women inherently differ in the various other ways I'll discuss. I would direct readers who seek deeper immersion in the arguments for modern Darwinism to various books, including Matt Ridley's *The Red Queen*, David Buss's *The Evolution of Desire* and (got a pencil handy?) my own recently published *The Moral Animal.* (Or, at a more academic level: Donald Symons's *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*; Martin Daly and Margo Wilson's *Sex, Evolution, and Behavior*; and *The Adapted Mind*, edited by Jerome Barkow, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby.)

In lieu of persuasion, I'll mostly confine my assertions about human nature to beliefs that are widely accepted within evolutionary psychology—doctrines subscribed to by, among others, many female (and male) Darwinians who would call themselves feminists. When discussing more speculative theories, I'll so label them. Of course, detached from the larger body of cross-cultural and cross-species evidence in which they're embedded, all these claims will strike any determined skeptic as "just-so stories." But do not excuse yourself from confronting them on grounds that they are just tired Darwinian doctrines, scrutinized by feminists and judiciously rejected. There is not a single well-known

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feminist who has learned enough about modern Darwinism to pass judgment on it.

Some of them would be well advised to. Though it is simplistic to say that evolutionary psychology vindicates one feminist school or another, some schools could use the field to support at least part of their platform. At the same time, every school can find something in the field that threatens cherished beliefs. Most feminists should have a love-hate relationship with modern Darwinism.

Oddly, given Darwinism's historical (and confused) association with right-wing politics, evolutionary psychology lends a kind of support to some of the most radical feminists, such as MacKinnon and Dworkin. Both have gotten lots of ink for saying genuinely nutty things (such as Dworkin's theatrical suggestion that all heterosexual sex is rape)—pronouncements that defy all attempts at justification. But both have other positions, of more measured extremity, that, if they can be justified at all, are best justified in Darwinian terms.

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM PRESTON FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Consider sexual harassment. MacKinnon helped establish the "hostile environment" test for harassment, and she defines such environments broadly; by her reckoning, two-thirds of working women have been harassed. Whereas some feminists consider the Anita Hill affair a borderline harassment case (if a clear-cut indictment of Clarence Thomas's character), MacKinnon jumped vehemently to Hill's defense.

I can see why: a man who held power over Hill was alleged to have made persistent, if not explicit, sexual overtures. Naturally, Hill would feel great distress. But I can only take this view by thinking of Hill as a woman, with the kind of mind natural selection designed for women. A man might feel uncomfortable with a comparable undercurrent of sexual advance from a female boss, but it would be strange for him to feel deep distress.

Again, the logic goes back to the fact that for women reproductive opportunities are precious. Thus during evolution it was costly (genetically) for a woman to have sex with a man she didn't want to have sex with—often a man who (*a*) evidently had genes not conducive to viable and fertile offspring or (*b*) had no evident inclination to stick around and help provide for the offspring. The abhorrence women feel at the prospect of sex with a man they find unattractive is an expression of this logic.

For men, the logic is different. Being coerced into sex with a woman (*a*) wasn't an issue during evolution, since men can't have sex unless physiologically aroused; and (*b*) would have had no large ill effects; the worst likely outcome for the man (in genetic terms) is that pregnancy would not ensue. And spending fifteen minutes failing to get a woman pregnant is hardly a major Darwinian disaster. There is no reason for evolution to have instilled in the male mind an aversion to coerced sex with women.

So, yes, I'd say Anita Hill was sexually harassed. She was under coercive, if subtle, pressure to have sex. But that judgment depends on her mind being a female mind, with female vulnerabilities.

Many feminists, even without any help from Darwin, have discerned the tension here: the more protection you want to provide women, the harder it is to argue that they don't by their nature need special protection; the more often you see them victimized, the stronger the implication that they are by nature victims, weaker than men. That is why some feminists resist MacKinnon's broader definitions of sexual harassment and of rape, and her view of pornography as an assault on women. That is why she is called a "victim" feminist—and not just by conservatives such as Christina Hoff Sommers, but by feminists further to the left, such as Naomi Wolf. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who as a liberal equity feminist professes to seek only equal treatment for women, remarked after hearing MacKinnon speak, "That woman has bad karma."

Yet the equity feminists have failed just as surely as MacKinnon to resolve the tension between protecting women and patronizing them. Consider the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in the latest sexual harassment case. It concerned a woman at a forklift company and her creepy boss. He would joke about large breasts, ask female employees to fish through his pockets for

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This is my Daddy.
Our house
me
Joe across the street
My Mommy knows the words to every song. She taught me how to do the hustle on the porch.
Every night he loses his glasses and Mommy turns around and tells him that they're on his head.
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coins and so on. The straw that broke the camel's back was his asking a subordinate if she had landed one of her accounts by meeting with the client at a Holiday Inn.

Ruling in support of the female worker, the Supreme Court tried to sustain a broad definition of "hostile environment." The victim, it said, needn't prove that she had been psychologically damaged—only that she might "reasonably" have found the comments hostile. But, in a bow to Ginsburg and the equity feminists, the Court cast its ruling in terms of a "reasonable person," not a "reasonable woman."

This simply won't wash. How does a "reasonable person" feel about the implication that he or she closed a deal by sleeping with a customer? Well, the average woman feels quite insulted, and the average man feels somewhere between mildly insulted and quite flattered. She is being called a whore. He is being called a stud.

It is tempting to dismiss these value-laden labels as the residue of centuries of patriarchy, or as echoes of the Victorian Madonna-whore dichotomy—ephemeral cultural pathologies that the Court needn't stoop to accommodate. But there is another explanation: these moral judgments may have a genetic basis.

To begin with, men tend to find a history of extreme promiscuity an exceedingly undesirable feature in a wife, and this makes perfect Darwinian sense. The more promiscuous the wife, the less likely that the children in which the man invests his time and energy are in fact carrying his genes. In other words, genes inclining men to abhor promiscuous long-term mates would do better at getting into ensuing generations than less discriminating genes. The logic isn't the same for women, since the children they give birth to *always* carry their genes (or, at least, did during evolution, before high technology—and that's what counts).

This isn't to say men don't find loose women sexy. From a Darwinian standpoint, loose women are in some ways great *sex* partners, because they're so easy to get—and for purposes of a man's genetic proliferation, remember, the more gettable women there are the better. (Contraception has now short-circuited this logic, too, but again: we're stuck with the minds the logic shaped.) A loose woman just isn't the genetically optimal woman to fall in *love* with; investing in her children is ill-advised.

Hence, it seems, the Madonna-whore distinction. Men appear to be designed by natural selection to feel merely lust for fast women but to feel love as well for (some) slower ones. They won't always insist on marrying a Madonna, of course, virgins being scarce, and, besides, the choice of a mate being a complex unconscious calculus full of tradeoffs. Still, men do often draw a morally colored distinction among their romantic prospects, viewing some kinds of women as full-fledged human beings, warranting extensive psychological exploration, and other kinds as something more like pieces of meat. And one of various features that can put a woman in the latter camp is a reputation for extreme promiscuity. Men seldom admit this to either kind of woman, and some men don't admit it to themselves. But if you listen carefully to men talking to one another, the attitude is there.

It is not surprising, then, that the average woman resists being publicly labeled "easy," regardless of her actual degree of promiscuity. During evolution, that label would have cut the chances of a man's investing in her offspring. (A general theme of evolutionary psychology is that we all naturally burnish our reputations in all kinds of ways, regardless of whether the gloss reflects our actual behavior.)

This idea of an inherent and morally charged male mental distinction between fast and slow women is just a theory. And, while it probably commands majority allegiance within evolutionary psychology (though only when given more nuance than space here permits), it is not as solidly established as, say, the idea of sex differences in promiscuity. Even more tentative is the idea that women have some natural aversion to accusations of extreme sexual looseness (though certainly women do, in general, resist them more than men). Still, the closer we look at the evidence, the better things look for the theory. Various culturally deterministic anthropologists, notably Margaret Mead, claimed to have found exotic cultures in which women were as prone to promiscuity as men and no one cared. These claims have collapsed upon reexamination. Mead's favorite example, Samoa, turns out to have featured a virtual male obsession with the virginity of mates. (In Samoan lore, as Derek Freeman noted in *Margaret Mead and Samoa*, a deflowered woman is called a "wanton woman, like an empty shell exposed by the ebbing tide." A song performed at defloration ceremonies went like this: "All others have failed to achieve entry.... Being first, he is foremost. O to be foremost.")

All of this explains what for almost everyone is the commonsense reaction to the forklift case, yet what few feminists will admit: the reason the remark about the Holiday Inn was offensive was because it was made to a woman. What evolutionary psychology suggests is that this relevance of gender to law is no fleeting creation of culture; jurists might as well reckon with it.

In the end, the problem with the Ginsburgian "reasonable person" formulation is not that it leads to a narrow definition of harassment, but that it leads to no definition at all. Asking what a "reasonable person" finds offensive is like asking what color a typical fruit is. The answer depends on whether you're talking apples or oranges.

The general truth suggested here is that we can either give women broad protection against sexual harassment that is grounded specifically in an understanding of the female mind, or we can ignore sex differences and give women much less protection. Or we can do what the Supreme Court did: carefully craft tortured legal doctrines that defy both common sense and our emerging comprehension of human nature—doc-

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trines that are unlikely to withstand the test of time.

Evolutionary psychology's tendency to provide at least some support for radical feminism goes beyond sexual harassment. Dworkin's contention that "dehumanization is a basic part of the content of all pornography" is characteristically overstated, but in Darwinian light it looks far from crazy. Certainly most pornography rivets the "whore," not the "Madonna," part of the male mind. The women in *Hustler* aren't women a man would want to marry. They're women whose appeal has nothing to do with getting to know them. Indeed, they're women who are exciting partly because they're portrayed as not demanding that he get to know them; they seem willing to be treated as meat, as optimally efficient sex objects.

To say that men objectify loose women isn't to say, alas, that men never see the lucky recipients of their lasting affection as objects. The male tendency to "possessively" guard mates against the advances of rivals may be more than mere metaphor. For men, "the same mental algorithms are apparently activated in the marital and mercantile spheres," write the evolutionary psychologists Martin Daly and Margo Wilson. Again, the reason seems to be the high genetic costs cuckoldry brings the male victim. As evolutionary psychologists have shown, the average woman isn't as threatened as the average man by the purely sexual infidelity of a mate, apparently because it doesn't so immediately threaten her genes.

Even the radical feminists' famously expansive definitions of rape have *some* Darwinian merit. One of MacKinnon's more moderate utterances on the subject is this: "Politically, I call it rape whenever a woman has sex and feels violated." Psychologically, too, you might call it that. When a woman has sex under a man's pretenses of enduring affection (Darwinian translation: pretenses of commitment to ensuing offspring) and then he never calls again, the evolutionary source of her anguish is the same as for the anguish following rape: she has had sex with a man she (unconsciously) deemed unworthy of her eggs, even though in this case the deeming was done after the fact, once evidence of his unworthiness surfaced.

Again, though, if you really want to claim such a broad realm of moral protection for women, you have to admit they're different from men and in some ways uniquely vulnerable. Men, after all, virtually never feel "violated" by sex with a woman. A man may feel crushed if a woman he loves leaves him, but it is an odd man indeed who regrets the sex.

Dworkin has distinguished between rape and seduction as follows: "In seduction, the rapist bothers to buy a bottle of wine." Another feminist has opined that rape is "on a continuum" with normal male sexual behavior. Some Darwinians would agree. They'd say rape is something men do when other forms of manipulation fail. It may be "natural" when men with a manifest inability to legitimately obtain a mate resort to sex with aggression. Hence the profile of the typical rapist: lacking the material and personal resources to attract women.

Dworkin has written, "A man wants what a woman has—sex. He can steal it (rape), persuade her to give it away (seduction), rent it (prostitution), lease it over the long term (marriage in the United States) or own it outright (marriage in most societies)." However depressing, this would strike some Darwinians as a fair thumbnail sketch of the situation. This doesn't mean men *think* of their pursuits this way (in general the radical feminists attribute too much conscious calculation to men); but it is a fairly apt functional analysis of the emotions men feel—from lust to love to the selective evaporation of affection upon conquest.

Plainly, the resonance between radical feminism and Darwinism isn't just that the former's implicit depiction of female vulnerabilities is explicit in the latter. Darwinism also depicts men as something like the animals that MacKinnon and Dworkin say they are. Human males are by nature oppressive, possessive, flesh-obsessed pigs. They're not beyond cultural improvement, thanks to the fact that love, compassion, guilt, remorse and the conscience are evolved parts of the mind, just like lust and jealous rage. Still, MacKinnon and Dworkin are probably right to suggest that the current cultural climate does a lackluster job of improving men.

I won't spend the next few weeks waiting for MacKinnon and Dworkin to call and thank me for empowering their worldview. For they don't want its power to run quite so deep. Dworkin denounces "female supremacists"—some of the difference feminists—as being "biological determinists." (Remarkably, she does this one paragraph after asserting that "men as a class are moral cretins.") MacKinnon, hit by less radical feminists with the entirely apt label "victim feminist," tries to fob it off on the difference feminists. Her reaction to Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice*, which depicted women as more empathetic and less abstractly logical than men in their moral thinking, was to call this "different" voice "the voice of a victim."

This aversion to "biological determinism" (a misnomer) is one thing all major brands of feminism have in common. Even the difference feminists don't want to talk about *deep* differences. Tannen, in her bestseller *You Just Don't Understand* and her recent *Talking From 9 to 5*, says men are on average more concerned than women with status and hierarchy. This undeniable fact begs to be placed on its proper Darwinian foundation. During evolution, high male status seems to have expanded sexual access to females (as it does in many species, including our nearest relatives, chimpanzees). This Darwinian perk has been documented in "hunter-gatherer" societies, the closest living model of the social context of human evolution. Given this distinctively male link between social achievement and genetic proliferation, it is plausible, to say the least, that millions of years of evolution would endow males with a distinctive thirst for power.

Yet Tannen couches her explanation for this thirst in cultural terms. The tendency of boys to "jockey for center stage, challenge those who get it and deflect chal-

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lenges" is "learned" by boys and not girls because boys' groups "tend to be more obviously hierarchical." Well, yes, lots of learning goes on, and every child has a range of flexibility whose bounds still aren't precisely known. Culture matters. But does that explain why the boys' groups are always more hierarchical in the first place? Tannen's overriding emphasis on culture would make more sense if she could point to a single one of the 1,200 societies on the anthropological record and show women, on average, pursuing social status and political power as fiercely and opportunistically as the average man. She can't.

Poor Tannen. Her evasion of Darwinism fails to keep her safe from the wrath of even the mild-mannered equity feminists. Katha Pollitt says Tannen and Gilligan "massage their findings to fit their theories," and that their prominence just proves that social science is "one part science and nine parts social. They say what people want to hear: women really are different, just the ways we always thought." Maybe so. But did you ever wonder why it is that we've always thought that?

It's logical that liberal feminists would fear the idea of innate sex differences in ambition. For it imperils two liberal feminist legal principles. One is sex discrimination—in particular, the claim that a gross underrepresentation of women in high-paying jobs is by itself evidence of discrimination. This logic assumes not just that men and women are equally qualified, but that they pursue a given job or promotion with equal intensity. If men are on average more ambitious than women, this assumption falters.

The second legal doctrine imperiled by evolutionary psychology is affirmative action for women. It is sometimes (not always) justified on similar grounds: that, in the absence of discrimination, men and women would be equally represented at the higher levels of corporate and government life. But if men on average work harder at self-advancement, this rationale won't work.

As Ridley notes in *The Red Queen*, there are other possible rationales for affirmative action. Our emerging knowledge of male-female differences might lead us to favor quotas for women on grounds that they are less inclined than men to sacrifice the organization's welfare to personal advancement. In other words: if a meritocracy is a place where people are promoted according to their actual value to the employer, then affirmative action may be needed to make the workplace a meritocracy. (The business pages are full of tales of male primates who follow their impulses to no good corporate end. How much money did Barry Diller waste trying vainly to outbid his old rival, Sumner Redstone, in the battle over—as it were—Paramount? A lot, but maybe not as much as Redstone wasted by "winning.")

Evolutionary psychology suggests that if affirmative action for women is to rest on coherent logic, the subject of sex differences will have to come into play. Once again: if women want broad protection, they can most cogently seek it as women, not as persons.

The deepest source of the feminist aversion to Darwinism is larger and vaguer than specific policy issues. Evolutionary psychology seems to paint a generally grim view of the "natural" order. Some of the ugliest things about the world—the very things that stirred modern feminist indignation to begin with—have biological roots. These include the male "patriarchy" that the radicals see everywhere they look, and men's attempts to control the sexuality of women. Even the classically reviled male hypocrisy over promiscuity—the "double standard"—appears to be a legacy of natural selection. Men not only are naturally inclined to cheat on their mates; men are also inclined to abhor, and thus fiercely condemn, the philandering of a mate. Women share both of these inclinations, but they aren't as strong as the male versions. Indeed, a woman may actually reinforce the double standard when she finds herself able to forgive a husband's sexual infidelity in order to head off what for her female ancestors was a much bigger threat—a mate's desertion, his withdrawal of resources.

None of this is great news for feminism (or, really, for humankind). But it isn't *quite* as bad as it seems. By getting clear on what the word "natural" does and doesn't mean, we can isolate the parts of evolutionary psychology that should most worry feminists.

To infer that what's "natural" is morally "good" is an elementary logical error, famously labeled the "naturalistic fallacy" by the turn-of-the-century British ethicist G.E. Moore. Indeed, I would go further. Darwinism not only doesn't tell us that the double standard is morally right; it tells us that any intuitive sense men have of its rightness is untrustworthy. This sense is a mere vestige of natural selection, morally arbitrary so far as we know. A central lesson of evolutionary psychology by my lights is that we should cast a wary eye on our moral intuitions generally (including, for example, the sense that retribution is just); they are a voice not from God but from our genes, echoes of our amoral creator, natural selection. What's natural may or may not be good, but it's certainly not good *by virtue of the fact* that it's natural.

Another thing "natural" doesn't mean is unchangeable. There are cultures in which the "natural" male impulse to control female sexuality is expressed as ritual genital mutilation. There are cultures in which a man may punish the infidelity of a wife by, say, cutting off her ears. But there are also cultures, like ours, in which men don't do such things. And there is no reason to think we've reached the biological limit of male malleability. Evolutionary psychologists aren't genetic determinists, and they aren't "biological determinists" except in a sense so broad as to encompass both genes and culture.

So much for the good news. The bad news is: (*a*) The average beer-drinking, two-timing, wife-beating lout isn't going to change his moral views after being handed a copy of G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*. He is more likely to conveniently see modern Darwinism as a divine embrace of his loutishness. And: (*b*) People, though malleable, aren't simply and infinitely malleable. They aren't malleable enough to make commu-

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nism a productive economic system, and they aren't malleable enough to create a society of perfect behavioral symmetry between men and women. Some changes simply can't be made, and others will come only at some cost.

Here is where the word "natural" assumes a second import that is not so easily dismissed as the first, and that feminists may find uncomfortable. Here we can expect men to turn the tables and use evolutionary psychology to talk about *their* vulnerabilities, to make *their* appeals for special treatment on grounds of peculiar biological predicament. Thus, for example, a man could argue for the double standard by saying (*a*) that his own philandering is hard to control, and (*b*) that he is more "vulnerable" than his wife to the pain of a mate's sexual infidelity.

Obviously, this is a self-serving argument. And it can be combated in two ways: by pointing to the social costs of male infidelity (which, I would argue, are extremely high in the current social environment); and by noting that "hard to control" doesn't mean "impossible to control." Still, this argument, though combatable, isn't laughable in the way the naturalistic fallacy is. It uses our understanding of "natural" impulses not to justify them as being *right*, strictly speaking, but to excuse them by stressing the psychic costs of defying them. Feminists are right to dread some of the rhetorical resistance Darwinism will abet.

Men seeking to stress their victim status can also lay claim to being "objectified" much as women are. Feminists complain about women's beauty and youth counting for so much in the eyes of men. (And this male obsession, according to evolutionary psychologists, isn't merely a product of Madison Avenue.) But men could just as easily complain about being viewed as walking wallets—about the fact that women place so much value on the social status and/or wealth of a mate. (This emphasis, too, appears to be a legacy of evolution, a deep aesthetic impulse that lives on after its evolutionary logic has been broken by a modern world in which women can earn their own wealth and status.) One reason you don't hear more about this male grievance is that low-status men have trouble getting their grievances heard. They aren't a very prominent group.

In the end, Darwinism's proper place in moral discourse is not to aid simplistic assertions about some natural order that is supposedly good or supposedly inevitable; but, rather, to inform arguments about the social costs and benefits of alternative norms in light of human nature, with heightened awareness of which groups the costs and benefits fall on. The issue of what's "natural" will enter the debate, but by itself should confer no justification for anything.

Feminists' fear of the word "natural," and their attendant reluctance to confront sex differences, has left open a gaping intellectual niche. Perhaps it is poetic justice that the void is being semi-occupied by the scourge of name-brand feminism, the dreaded Camille Paglia. At least, Paglia professes to be a Darwinian; she talks about "instinctual drives" and says primal things like "sex crime means back to nature." Still, she has no evident grasp of evolutionary theory and prefers free-form literary explanation. For example, when men kill mates or ex-mates, it is usually out of jealousy, and many evolutionary psychologists would call this an extreme, pathological expression of a "natural" impulse to punish a woman for real or suspected infidelity. But Paglia has a different explanation: "Men who kill the women they love have reverted to pagan cult. She whom a man cannot live without has become a goddess, an avatar of his half-divinized, half-demonized mother, a magic fountain of cosmic creativity." Thanks for clearing that up.

For all her impressionistic excess, Paglia does tell a few simple, crude truths about sex differences, and this is one reason she's gotten where she is today (the other being the impressionistic excess). If name-brand feminists don't like the moral spin she puts on her comic-book Darwinism, there's one solution: to learn real Darwinism and put their own moral spin on it. It is certainly spinnable; like all theories of human behavior, evolutionary psychology has no inherent moral upshot. It merely limits the range of realistic moral and political discourse. Within the arena thus defined, interest groups will contest, each trying to shape the moral and legal codes to its ends. And the groups that aren't in the arena will lose.

In retrospect, much of the recent history of feminism might have been predicted with the help of evolutionary psychology. To begin with, the prime mover of modern feminism, the discontent of the 1950s suburban housewife, was entirely natural. To see this, you need only look at a hunter-gatherer society, which, being a rough approximation of the social context of human evolution, is a rough guide to the patterns of behavior "natural" to us, absent the influence of modern technological society. In hunter-gatherer societies, women have a career: gathering. This may sound to an upper-middle-class feminist like menial labor, but it gets them out of the house. (And besides, menial compared to what—hunting?)

But women in such societies are also mothers, the primary caregivers. And reconciling their home and work lives is surprisingly practical. When they go out to gather food, child care is barely an issue; their children may go with them or, instead, stay with relatives. And when mothers, back from work, do care for children, the context is social, even communal. As the anthropologist Marjorie Shostak wrote after observing the !Kung San hunter-gatherers, "The isolated mother burdened with bored small children is not a scene that has parallels in !Kung daily life." Women weren't designed to be suburban housewives.

The generic suburban habitat of the '50s was more "natural," more congenial, for men. Like many hunter-gatherer fathers, vintage suburban husbands spent a little time with children and a lot of time out bonding with males, in work, play or ritual. Thus the grievance

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that drove 1950s housewives toward feminism was solidly grounded: suburbia let men behave naturally while forcing mothers into artificial isolation—removed from their kin, often lacking close friends and devoid of purpose beyond child-rearing.

If this inequity is clear from a Darwinian vantage point, so is the reason that redressing it has been hard. It is no surprise that many working mothers feel not just harried by their dual identity but guilty about it—guilty about, say, spending forty hours a week away from a 1- or 2-year-old child while the child is in the hands of someone who is neither kin nor close friend. To judge by hunter-gatherer societies, this is quite an unnatural predicament. That doesn't mean women can't adapt to it. But anecdotal evidence suggests that they don't easily do so, and that some working mothers today aren't dramatically happier than the lonely suburban mothers of the 1950s.

This is one of the most pressing issues now facing women. Various partial solutions are possible, such as job-sharing and workplace-based child care. But if these are to be pursued vigorously *as feminist issues*, it would help to acknowledge that they are fundamentally the concerns of women; that, although men can certainly play a large role in child-rearing, it's much easier for the average man than for the average woman to be away from young offspring—and that it always will be.

Many feminists will admit no such thing. The reason women have always been primary caregivers, Pollitt writes, has nothing in particular to do with their psychology. "Historically, women have taken care of children because high fertility and lack of other options left most of them no choice." Well, yes, that's been going on for a while—throughout human evolution, in fact. That's why any evolutionary psychologist finds it hard to believe that natural selection wouldn't have molded the female mind to this task. The task, after all, is pretty vital: protecting the vessel that carries the genes into the next generation.

Some consider the liberal equity feminists the most sober of the major schools of feminism, and Pollitt in particular has become known as the voice of calm reason. Yet she and the other mainstream liberals may have the most warped vision in all of feminism. Quite unlike the difference feminists, and more than the radical feminists, they are committed to ignoring basic features of reality. Imagine a social observer as acute as Pollitt not sensing how deeply—well, for lack of a better term—*maternal* women are compared with men. That must take a lot of perceptual restraint.

When Pollitt, under the pressure of overwhelming evidence, does concede some distinctive female feature, she seems disappointed, no matter how ostensibly laudable it is, and hastens to predict its demise. Thus she grants that "social scientists who look for it can find traces of empathy, caring and so on in some women who have risen in the world of work and power." But that's just because "we are in a transition period" and working women haven't yet learned the ropes. Thus, it seems, we can look forward to a day when working women will have been stripped of the last trace of empathy and caring. Then they'll be just like men. Congratulations.

The reductio ad absurdum of Pollitt's attitude has been performed by the feminist novelist Katherine Dunn. When she isn't celebrating the several women who have taken up boxing (equal opportunity brain damage!), Dunn spends her time trying to dispel some of the fuss about wife-beating. In both this magazine and *Mother Jones*, she has touted some study that found that women strike their husbands about as often as men strike their wives. Well, maybe so (though probably not). But getting hit is not the essence of being an abused spouse. Chronic intimidation is. How many husbands live in fear of assault by their wives? How many husbands, while out with their wives, desperately avoid eye contact with the opposite sex lest they be beaten upon returning to their cage? That major liberal magazines are publishing articles whose predictable effect is to downplay the plight of battered wives is a sure sign that equity feminism's denial of harsh Darwinian truths is reaching pathological extremes.

To be sure, neither the difference feminists nor the radical feminists come close to getting the whole picture. The difference feminists often stress ways women are good, and the radical feminists always stress ways men are bad; both tend to ignore female badness and male goodness. Also, of course, both schools deny any important role for biology. Still, at least the larger project of the radical feminists and, especially, of the difference feminists, is quietly eroding that denial; the fit between Darwinian theory and the social reality they're documenting is too neat to go unnoticed. That these feminists are emphatically not Darwinians makes their database even more valuable as objective corroboration.

The radical feminists' penetrating perception of social reality, paired with delusion about its deepest roots, is reminiscent of Marxism. Though Marx fooled himself about human nature, his view of the way the upper classes exploit their power, manipulating ideology to the detriment of the less fortunate, is acute (and, actually, quite Darwinian), much like the radical feminists' keen attention to the levers of male sexual power. (Though the radical feminists tend to ignore the often subtler means by which women use their sexuality to control men.) And the parallels don't end there. Like the Marxists, the radical feminists are marginalizing themselves by the hyperbole of their indictment and by their dreams of a perfect post-revolution world. They depict an enemy of overwhelming force and envision its unconditional surrender.

With both Marxism and feminism, the struggle against the forces of oppression is worthy and, up to a point, practical. But in both cases, the struggle is best conducted with thorough comprehension of those forces and of their bases in human nature. If feminists—of all stripes—want to know their enemy, it is now available for inspection. •

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The Catholic Church and the homosexual.

Alone Again, Naturally

By Andrew Sullivan

In everyone there sleeps
A sense of life lived according to love.
To some it means the difference they could make
By loving others, but across most it sweeps
As all they might have been had they been loved.
That nothing cures.
—Philip Larkin, "Faith Healing"

I.

I can remember the first time what, for the sake of argument, I will call my sexuality came into conflict with what, for the sake of argument, I will call my faith. It was time for Communion in my local parish church, Our Lady and St. Peter's, a small but dignified building crammed between an Indian restaurant and a stationery shop, opposite a public restroom, on the main street of a smallish town south of London called East Grinstead. I must have been around 15 or so. Every time I received Communion, I attempted, following my mother's instructions, to offer up the sacrament for some current problem or need: my mother's health, an upcoming exam, the starving in Bangladesh or whatever. Most of these requests had to do with either something abstract and distant, like a cure for cancer, or something extremely tangible, like a better part in the school play. Like much else in my faith-life, they were routine and yet not completely drained of sincerity. But rarely did they address something that could unsettle the comfort of my precocious adolescence. This time, however, as I filed up to the Communion rail to face mild-mannered Father Simmons for the umpteenth time, something else intervened. Please, I remember asking almost offhandedly of God, after a quick recital of my other failings, help me with *that*.

I didn't have a name for it, since it was, to all intents and purposes, nameless. I don't think I'd ever heard it mentioned at home, except once when my mother referred to someone who had behaved inappropriately on my father's town rugby team. (He had been dealt with, she reported darkly.) At high school, the subject was everywhere and nowhere: at the root of countless jokes but never actualized as something that could affect anyone we knew. But this ubiquity and abstraction brought home the most important point: uniquely among failings, homosexuality was so abominable it could not even be mentioned. The occasions when it was actually discussed were so rare that they stand out even now in my mind: our Latin teacher's stating that homosexuality was obviously wrong since it meant "sticking your dick in the wrong hole"; the graffiti in the public restroom in Reigate High Street: "My mother made me a homosexual," followed closely by, "If I gave her the wool, would she make me one too?" Although my friends and family never stinted in pointing out other faults on my part, this, I knew, would never be confronted. So when it emerged as an irresistible fact of my existence, and when it first seeped into my life of dutiful prayer and worship, it could be referred to only in the inarticulate void of that Sunday evening before Communion.

From the beginning, however—and this is something many outside the Church can find hard to understand—my sexuality was part of my faith-life, not a revolt against it. Looking back, I realize that that moment at the Communion rail was the first time I had actually addressed the subject of homosexuality explicitly in front of anyone; and I had brought it to God in the moments before the most intimate act of sacramental Communion. Because it was something I was deeply ashamed of, I felt obliged to confront it; but because it was also something inextricable—even then—from the core of my existence, it felt natural to enlist God's help rather than his judgment in grappling with it. There was, of course, considerable tension in this balance of alliance and rejection; but there was also something quite natural about it, an accurate reflection of anyone's compromised relationship with what he or she hazards to be the divine.

To the outsider, faith often seems a kind of cataclysmic intervention, a Damascene moment of revelation and transformation, and no doubt, for a graced few, this is indeed the experience. But this view of faith is often, it seems to me, a way to salve the unease of a faithless life by constructing the alternative as something so alien to actual experience that it is safely beyond reach. Faith for me has never been like that. The moments of genuine intervention and spiritual clarity have been minuscule in number and, when they have occurred, hard to discern and harder still to understand. In the midst of this uncertainty, the sacraments, especially that of Communion, have always been for me the only truly reliable elements of direction, concrete instantiations of another order. Which is why, perhaps, it was at Communion that the subject reared its confusing, shaming presence.

The two experiences came together in other ways, too. Like faith, one's sexuality is not simply a choice; it informs a whole way of being. But like faith, it involves choices—the choice to affirm or deny a central part of one's being, the choice to live a life that does not deny but confronts reality. It is, like faith, mysterious, emerging clearly one day, only to disappear the next, taking different forms—of passion, of lust, of intimacy, of fear. And like faith, it points toward something other and more powerful than the self. The physical communion with the other in sexual life hints at the same kind of transcendence as the physical Communion with the Other that lies at the heart of the sacramental Catholic vision.

So when I came to be asked, later in life, how I could be gay and Catholic, I could answer only that I simply was. What to others appeared a simple contradiction was, in reality, the existence of these two connected, yet sometimes parallel, experiences of the world. It was not that my sexuality was involuntary and my faith chosen and that therefore my sexuality posed a problem for my faith; nor was it that my faith was involuntary and my sexuality chosen so that my faith posed a problem for my sexuality. It was that both were chosen and unchosen continuously throughout my life, as parts of the same search for something larger. As I grew older, they became part of me, inseparable from my understanding of myself. My faith existed at the foundation of how I saw the world; my sexuality grew to be inseparable from how I felt the world.

I am aware that this formulation of the problem is theologically flawed. Faith, after all, is not a sensibility; in the Catholic sense, it is a statement about reality that cannot be negated by experience. And there is little doubt about what the authority of the Church teaches about the sexual expression of a homosexual orientation. But this was not how the problem first presented itself. The immediate difficulty was not how to make what I *did* conform with what the Church taught me (until my early 20s, I did very little that could be deemed objectively

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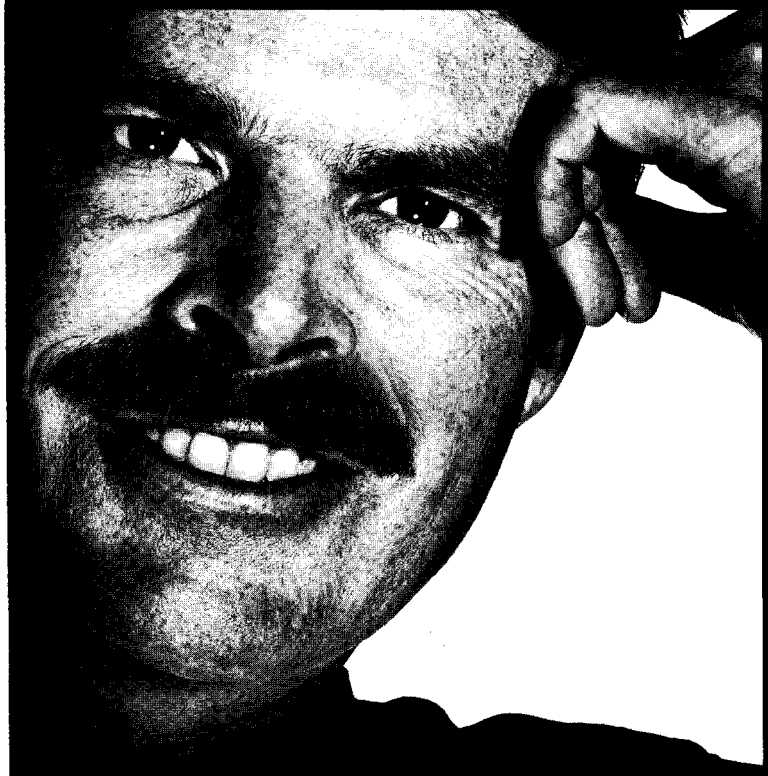

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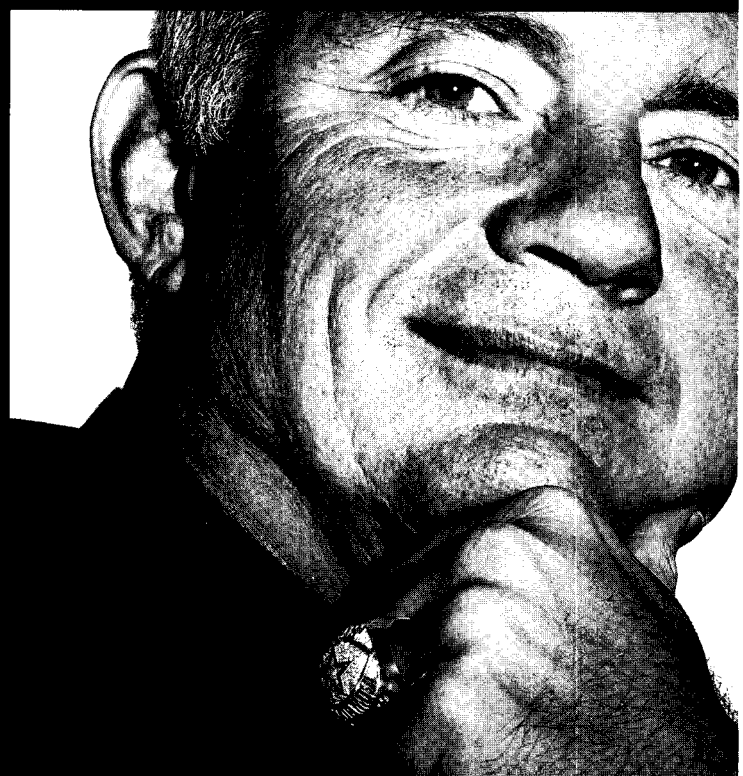

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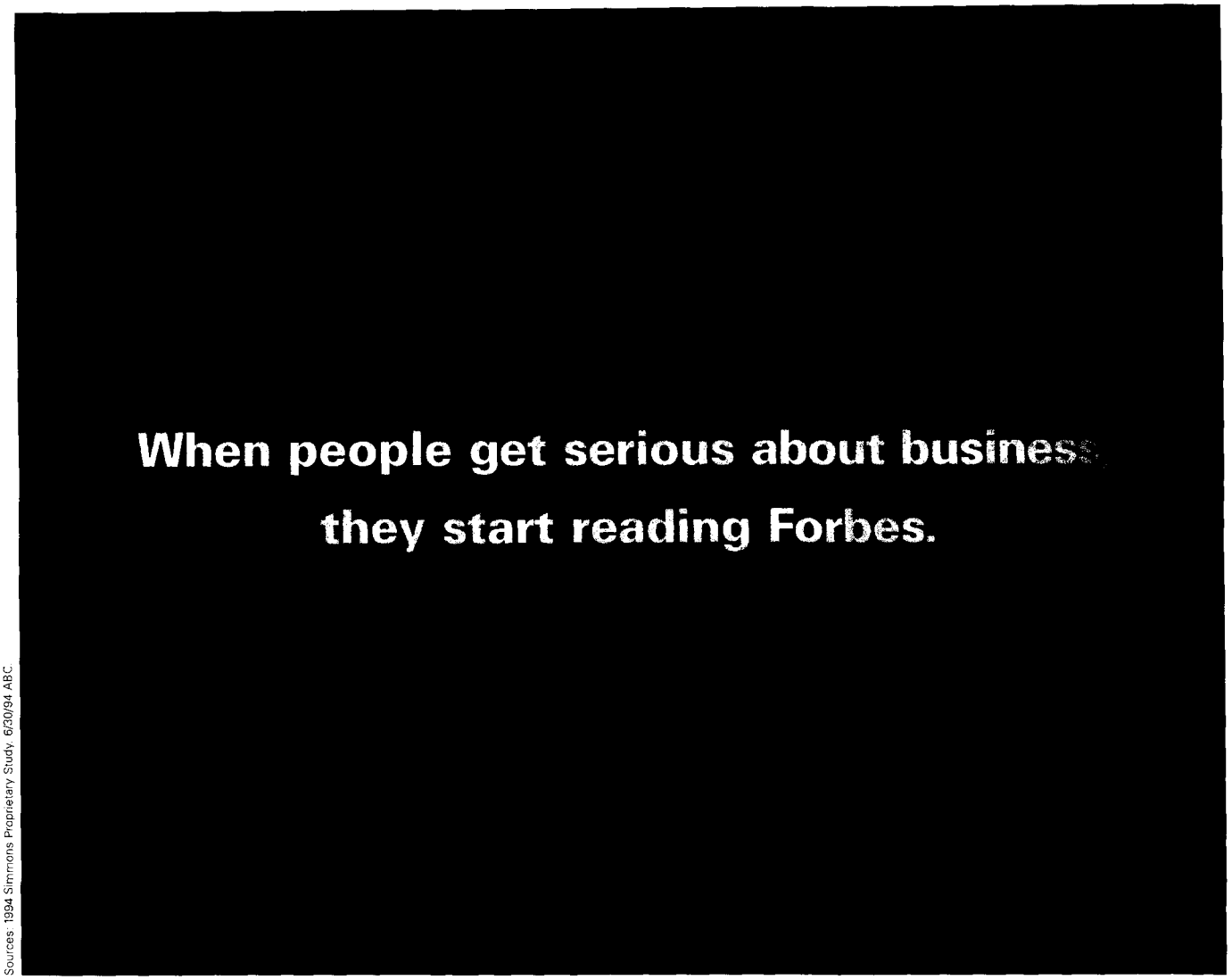

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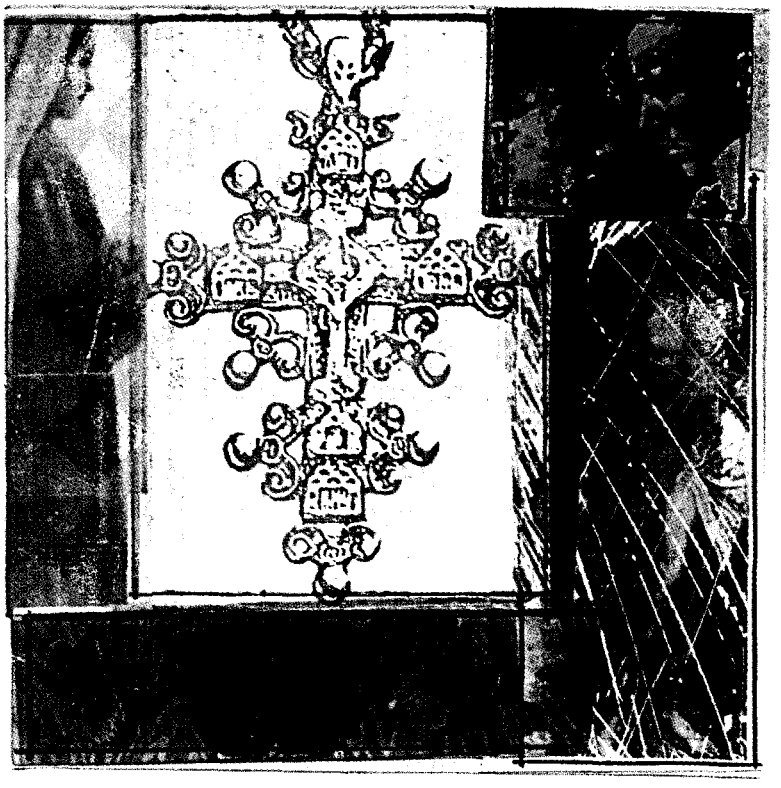
sinful with regard to sex), but how to make who I *was* conform with what the Church taught me. This was a much more difficult proposition. It did not conform to a simple contradiction between self and God, as that afternoon in the Communion line attested. It entailed trying to understand how my adolescent crushes and passions, my longings for human contact, my stumbling attempts to relate love to life, could be so inimical to the Gospel of Christ and His Church, how they could be so unmentionable among people I loved and trusted.

So I resorted to what many young homosexuals and lesbians resort to. I found a way to expunge love from life, to construct a trajectory that could somehow explain this absence, and to hope that what seemed so natural and overwhelming could somehow be dealt with. I studied hard to explain away my refusal to socialize; I developed intense intellectual friendships that bordered on the emotional, but I kept them restrained in a carapace of artificiality to prevent passion from breaking out. I adhered to a hopelessly pessimistic view of the world, which could explain my refusal to take part in life's pleasures, and to rationalize the dark and deep depressions that periodically overwhelmed me.

No doubt some of this behavior was part of any teenager's panic at the prospect of adulthood. But looking back, it seems unlikely that this pattern had nothing whatsoever to do with my being gay. It had another twist: it sparked an intense religiosity that could provide me with the spiritual resources I needed to fortify my barren emotional life. So my sexuality and my faith entered into a dialectic: my faith propelled me away from my emotional and sexual longing, and the deprivation that this created required me to resort even more dogmatically to my faith. And as my faith had to find increasing power to restrain the hormonal and emotional turbulence of adolescence, it had to take on a caricatured shape, aloof and dogmatic, ritualistic and awesome. As time passed, a theological austerity became the essential complement to an emotional emptiness. And as the emptiness deepened, the austerity sharpened.



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II.

In a remarkable document titled "Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics," issued by the Vatican in 1975, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith made the following statement regarding the vexed issue of homosexuality: "A distinction is drawn, and it seems with some reason, between homosexuals whose tendency comes from a false education, from a lack of normal sexual development, from habit, from bad example, or from other similar causes, and is transitory or at least not incurable; and homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct or a pathological constitution judged to be incurable."

The Church was responding, it seems, to the growing sociological and psychological evidence that, for a small minority of people, homosexuality is unchosen and unalterable. In the context of a broad declaration on a whole range of sexual ethics, this statement was something of a minor digression (twice as much space was devoted to the "grave moral disorder" of masturbation); and it certainly didn't mean a liberalization of doctrine about the morality of homosexual acts, which were "intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of."

Still, the concession complicated things. Before 1975 the modern Church, when it didn't ignore the matter, had held a coherent view of the morality of homosexual acts. It maintained that homosexuals, as the modern world had come to define them, didn't really exist; rather, everyone was essentially a heterosexual and homosexual acts were acts chosen by heterosexuals, out of depravity, curiosity, impulse, predisposition or bad moral guidance. Such acts were an abuse of the essential heterosexual orientation of all humanity; they were condemned because they failed to link sexual activity with a binding commitment between a man and a woman in a marriage, a marriage that was permanently open to the possibility of begetting children. Homosexual sex was condemned in exactly the same way and for exactly the same reasons as premarital heterosexual sex, adultery or contracepted sex: it failed to provide the essential conjugal and procreative context for sexual relations.

The reasoning behind this argument rested on natural law. Natural law teaching, drawing on Aristotelian and Thomist tradition, argued that the sexual nature of man was naturally linked to both emotional fidelity and procreation so that, outside of this context, sex was essentially destructive of the potential for human flourishing: "the full sense of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love," as the encyclical *Gaudium et Spes* put it.

But suddenly, a new twist had been made to this argument. There was, it seems, *in nature*, a group of people who were "definitively" predisposed to violation of this natural law; their condition was "innate" and "incurable." Insofar as it was innate—literally *innatus* or "inborn"—this condition was morally neutral, since anything involuntary could not be moral or immoral; it simply was. But always and everywhere, the activity to which this condition led was "intrinsically disordered and [could] in no case be approved of." In other words, something fundamentally in nature always and everywhere violated a vital part of the nature of human beings; something essentially blameless was always and everywhere blameworthy if acted upon.

The paradox of this doctrine was evident even within its first, brief articulation. Immediately before stating the in-

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trinsic disorder of homosexuality, the text averred that in "the pastoral field, these homosexuals must certainly be treated with understanding and sustained in the hope of overcoming their personal difficulties.... Their culpability will be judged with prudence." This compassion for the peculiar plight of the homosexual was then elaborated: "This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it...." Throughout, there are alternating moments of alarm and quiescence; tolerance and panic; categorical statement and prudential doubt.

It was therefore perhaps unsurprising that, within a decade, the Church felt it necessary to take up the matter again. The problem could have been resolved by a simple reversion to the old position, the position maintained by fundamentalist Protestant churches: that homosexuality was a hideous, yet curable, affliction of heterosexuals. But the Church doggedly refused to budge from its assertion of the natural occurrence of constitutive homosexuals—or from its compassion for and sensitivity to their plight. In Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's 1986 letter, "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," this theme is actually deepened, beginning with the title.

To non-Catholics, the use of the term "homosexual person" might seem a banality. But the term "person" constitutes in Catholic moral teaching a profound statement about the individual's humanity, dignity and worth; it invokes a whole range of rights and needs; it reflects the recognition by the Church that a homosexual person deserves exactly the same concern and compassion as a heterosexual person, having all the rights of a human being, and all the value, in the eyes of God. This idea was implicit in the 1975 declaration, but was never advocated. Then there it was, eleven years later, embedded in Ratzinger's very title. Throughout his text, homosexuality, far from being something unmentionable or disgusting, is discussed with candor and subtlety. It is worthy of close attention: "[T]he phenomenon of homosexuality, complex as it is and with its many consequences for society and ecclesial life, is a proper focus for the Church's pastoral care. It thus requires of her ministers attentive study, active concern and honest, theologically well-balanced counsel." And here is Ratzinger on the moral dimensions of the unchosen nature of homosexuality: "[T]he particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin." Moreover, homosexual persons, he asserts, are "often generous and giving of themselves." Then, in a stunning passage of concession, he marshals the Church's usual arguments in defense of human dignity in order to defend homosexual dignity:

> It is deplorable that homosexual persons have been and are the object of violent malice in speech or in action. Such treatment deserves condemnation from the Church's pastors wherever it occurs. It reveals a kind of disregard for others which endangers the most fundamental principles of a healthy society. The intrinsic dignity of each person must always be respected in word, in action and in law.

Elsewhere, Ratzinger refers to the homosexual's "God-given dignity and worth"; condemns the view that homosexuals are totally compulsive as a "demeaning assumption"; and argues that "the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation."

Why are these statements stunning? Because they reveal how far the Church had, by the mid-1980s, absorbed the common sense of the earlier document's teaching on the involuntariness of homosexuality, and had had the courage to reach its logical conclusion. In Ratzinger's letter, the Church stood foursquare against bigotry, against demeaning homosexuals either by anti-gay slander or violence or by pro-gay attempts to reduce human beings to one aspect of their personhood. By denying that homosexual activity was totally compulsive, the Church could open the door to an entire world of moral discussion about ethical and unethical homosexual behavior, rather than simply dismissing it all as pathological. What in 1975 had been "a pathological constitution judged to be incurable" was, eleven years later, a "homosexual person," "made in the image and likeness of God."

But this defense of the homosexual person was only half the story. The other half was that, *at the same time*, the Church strengthened its condemnation of any and all homosexual activity. By 1986 the teachings condemning homosexual acts were far more categorical than they had been before. Ratzinger had guided the Church into two simultaneous and opposite directions: a deeper respect for homosexuals, and a sterner rejection of almost anything they might do.

At the beginning of the 1986 document, Ratzinger bravely confronted the central paradox: "In the discussion which followed the publication of the [1975] declaration ... an overly benign interpretation was given to the homosexual condition itself, some going so far as to call it neutral or even good. Although the particular inclination of the homosexual person is not a sin, it is a more or less strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil and thus the inclination itself must be seen as an objective disorder." Elsewhere, he reiterated the biblical and natural law arguments against homosexual relations. Avoiding the problematic nature of the Old Testament's disavowal of homosexual acts (since these are treated in the context of such "abominations" as eating pork and having intercourse during menstruation, which the Church today regards with equanimity), Ratzinger focused on St. Paul's admonitions against homosexuality: "Instead of the original harmony between Creator and creatures, the acute distortion of idolatry has led to all kinds of moral excess. Paul is at a loss to find a clearer example of this disharmony than homosexual relations." There was also the simple natural-law argument: "It is only in the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good. A person engaging in homosexual behavior therefore acts immorally." The point about procreation was strengthened by an argument about the natural, "complementary union able to transmit life," which is heterosexual marriage. The fact that homosexual sex cannot be a part of this union means that it "thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living." Thus "homosexual activity" is inherently "self-indulgent." "Homosexual activity," Ratzinger's document claimed in a veiled and ugly reference to HIV, is a "form of life which constantly threatens to destroy" homosexual persons.

This is some armory of argument. The barrage of statements directed against "homosexual activity," which Ratzinger associates in this document exclusively with genital sex, is all the more remarkable because it occurs in a document that has otherwise gone further than might have been thought imaginable in accepting homosexuals into the heart of the Church and of humanity. Ratzinger's letter was asking us, it seems, to love the sinner more deeply than ever before, but to hate the sin even more passionately. This is a demand with which most Catholic homosexuals have at some time or other engaged in anguished combat.

III.

It is also a demand that raises the central question of the two documents and, indeed, of any Catholic homosexual life: How intelligible is the Church's theological and moral position on the blamelessness of homosexuality and the moral depravity of homosexual acts? This question is the one I wrestled with in my early 20s, as the increasing aridity of my emotional life began to conflict with the possibility of my living a moral life. The distinction made

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some kind of sense in theory; but in practice, the command to love oneself as a person of human dignity yet hate the core longings that could make one emotionally whole demanded a sense of detachment or a sense of cynicism that seemed inimical to the Christian life. To deny lust was one thing; to deny love was another. And to deny love in the context of *Christian* doctrine seemed particularly perverse. Which begged a prior question: Could the paradoxes of the Church's position reflect a deeper incoherence at their core?

One way of tackling the question is to look for useful analogies to the moral paradox of the homosexual. Greed, for example, might be said to be an innate characteristic of human beings, which, in practice, is always bad. But the analogy falls apart immediately. Greed is itself evil; it is prideful, a part of Original Sin. It is not, like homosexuality, a blameless natural condition that inevitably leads to what are understood as immoral acts. Moreover, there is no subgroup of innately greedy people, nor a majority of people in which greed never occurs. Nor are the greedy to be treated with respect. There is no paradox here, and no particular moral conundrum.

Aquinas suggests a way around this problem. He posits that some things that occur in nature may be in accordance with an individual's nature, but somehow against human nature in general: "for it sometimes happens that one of the principles which is natural to the species as a whole has broken down in one of its individual members; the result can be that something which runs counter to the nature of the species as a whole, happens to be in harmony with nature for a particular individual: as it becomes natural for a vessel of water which has been heated to give out heat." Forget, for a moment, the odd view that somehow it is more "natural" for a vessel to exist at one temperature than another. The fundamental point here is that there are natural urges in a particular person that may run counter to the nature of the species as a whole. The context of this argument is a discussion of pleasure: How is it, if we are to trust nature (as Aquinas and the Church say we must), that some natural pleasures in some people are still counter to human nature as a whole? Aquinas's only response is to call such events functions of sickness, what the modern Church calls "objective disorder." But here, too, the analogies he provides are revealing: they are bestiality and cannibalism. Aquinas understands each of these activities as an emanation of a predilection that seems to occur more naturally in some than in others. But this only reveals some of the special problems of lumping homosexuality in with other "disorders." Even Aquinas's modern disciples (and, as we've seen, the Church) concede that involuntary orientation to the same gender does not spring from the same impulses as cannibalism or bestiality. Or indeed that cannibalism is ever a "natural" pleasure in the first place, in the way that, for some bizarre reason, homosexuality is.

What, though, of Aquinas's better argument—that a predisposition to homosexual acts is a mental or physical *illness* that is itself morally neutral, but always predisposes people to inherently culpable acts? Here, again, it is hard to think of a precise analogy. Down syndrome, for example, occurs in a minority and is itself morally neutral; but when it leads to an immoral act, such as, say, a temper tantrum directed at a loving parent, the Church is loath to judge that person as guilty of choosing to break a commandment. The condition excuses the action. Or, take epilepsy: if an epileptic person has a seizure that injures another human being, she is not regarded as morally responsible for her actions, insofar as they were caused by epilepsy. There is no paradox here either, but for a different reason: with greed, the condition itself is blameworthy; with epilepsy, the injurious act is blameless.

Another analogy can be drawn. What of something like alcoholism? This is a blameless condition, as science and psychology have shown. Some people have a predisposition to it; others do not. Moreover, this predisposition is linked, as homosexuality is, to a particular act. For those with a predisposition to alcoholism, having a drink might be morally disordered, destructive to the human body and spirit. So, alcoholics, like homosexuals, should be welcomed into the Church, but only if they renounce the activity their condition implies.

Unfortunately, even this analogy will not hold. For one thing, drinking is immoral only for alcoholics. Moderate drinking is perfectly acceptable, according to the Church, for non-alcoholics. On the issue of homosexuality, to follow the analogy, the Church would have to say that sex between people of the same gender would be—in moderation—fine for heterosexuals but not for homosexuals. In fact, of course, the Church teaches the opposite, arguing that the culpability of homosexuals engaged in sexual acts should be judged with prudence—and *less* harshly—than the culpability of heterosexuals who engage in "perversion."

But the analogy to alcoholism points to a deeper problem. Alcoholism does not ultimately work as an analogy because it does not reach to the core of the human condition in the way that homosexuality, following the logic of the Church's arguments, does. If alcoholism is overcome by a renunciation of alcoholic acts, then recovery allows the human being to realize his or her full potential, a part of which, according to the Church, is the supreme act of self-giving in a life of matrimonial love. But if homosexuality is overcome by a renunciation of homosexual emotional and sexual union, the opposite is achieved: the human being is liberated into sacrifice and pain, barred from the matrimonial love that the Church holds to be intrinsic, for most people, to the state of human flourishing. Homosexuality is a structural condition that restricts the human being, even if homosexual acts are renounced, to a less than fully realized life. In other words, the gay or lesbian person is deemed disordered at a far deeper level than the alcoholic: at the level of the human capacity to love and be loved by another human being, in a union based on fidelity and self-giving. Their renunciation of such love also is not guided toward some ulterior or greater goal—as the celibacy of the religious orders is designed to intensify their devotion to God. Rather, the loveless homosexual destiny is precisely toward nothing, a negation of human fulfillment, which is why the Church understands that such persons, even in the act of obedient self-renunciation, are called "to enact the will of God in their life by joining whatever sufferings and difficulties they experience in virtue of their condition to the sacrifice of the Lord's cross."

This suggests another analogy: the sterile person. Here, too, the person is structurally barred by an innate or incurable condition from the full realization of procreative union with another person. One might expect that such people would be regarded in exactly the same light as homosexuals. They would be asked to commit themselves to a life of complete celibacy and to offer up their pain toward a realization of Christ's sufferings on the cross. But that, of course, is not the Church's position. Marriage is available to sterile couples or to those past child-bearing age; these couples are not prohibited from having sexual relations.

One is forced to ask: What rational distinction can be made, on the Church's own terms, between the position of sterile people and that of homosexual people with regard to sexual relations and sacred union? If there is nothing morally wrong, per se, with the homosexual condition or with homosexual love and self-giving, then homosexuals are indeed analogous to those who, by blameless fate, cannot reproduce. With the sterile couple, it could be argued, miracles might happen.

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But miracles, by definition, can happen to anyone. What the analogy to sterility suggests, of course, is that the injunction against homosexual union does not rest, at heart, on the arguments about openness to procreation, but on the Church's failure to fully absorb its own teachings about the dignity and worth of homosexual persons. It cannot yet see them as it sees sterile heterosexuals: people who, with respect to procreation, suffer from a clear, limiting condition, but who nevertheless have a potential for real emotional and spiritual self-realization, in the heart of the Church, through the transfiguring power of the matrimonial sacrament. It cannot yet see them as truly made in the image of God.

But this, maybe, is to be blind in the face of the obvious. Even with sterile people, there is a symbolism in the union of male and female that speaks to the core nature of sexual congress and its ideal instantiation. There is no such symbolism in the union of male with male or female with female. For some Catholics, this "symbology" goes so far as to bar even heterosexual intercourse from positions apart from the missionary—face to face, male to female, in a symbolic act of love devoid of all non-procreative temptation. For others, the symbology is simply about the notion of "complementarity," the way in which each sex is invited in the act of sexual congress—even when they are sterile—to perceive the mystery of the other; when the two sexes are the same, in contrast, the act becomes one of mere narcissism and self-indulgence, a higher form of masturbation. For others still, the symbolism is simply about Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve, and the essentially dual, male-female center of the natural world. Denying this is to offend the complementary dualism of the universe.

But all these arguments are arguments for the centrality of heterosexual sexual acts in nature, not their exclusiveness. It is surely possible to concur with these sentiments, even to laud their beauty and truth, while also conceding that it is nevertheless also true that nature seems to have provided a spontaneous and mysterious contrast that could conceivably be understood to complement—even dramatize—the central male-female order. In many species and almost all human cultures, there are some who seem to find their destiny in a similar but different sexual and emotional union. They do this not by subverting their own nature, or indeed human nature, but by fulfilling it in a way that doesn't deny heterosexual primacy, but rather honors it by its rare and distinct otherness. As albinos remind us of the brilliance of color; as redheads offer a startling contrast to the blandness of their peers; as genius teaches us, by contrast, the virtue of moderation; as the disabled person reveals to us in negative form the beauty of the fully functioning human body; so the homosexual person might be seen as a natural foil to the heterosexual norm, a variation that does not eclipse the theme, but resonates with it. Extinguishing—or prohibiting—homosexuality is, from this point of view, not a virtuous necessity, but the real crime against nature, a refusal to accept the pied beauty of God's creation, a denial of the way in which the other need not threaten, but may actually give depth and contrast to the self.

This is the alternative argument embedded in the Church's recent grappling with natural law, that is just as consonant with the spirit of natural law as the Church's current position. It is more consonant with what actually occurs in nature; seeks an end to every form of natural life; and upholds the dignity of each human person. It is so obvious an alternative to the Church's current stance that it is hard to imagine the forces of avoidance that have kept it so firmly at bay for so long.

IV.

For many homosexual Catholics, life within the Church is a difficult endeavor. In my 20s, as I attempted to unite the possibilities of sexual longing and emotional commitment, I discovered what many heterosexuals and homosexuals had discovered before me: that it is a troubling and troublesome mission. There's a disingenuous tendency, when discussing both homosexual and heterosexual emotional life, to glamorize and idealize the entire venture. To posit the possibility of a loving union, after all, is not to guarantee its achievement. There is also a lamentable inclination to believe that all conflicts can finally be resolved; that the homosexual Catholic's struggle can be removed by a simple theological *coup de main*; that the conflict is somehow deeper than many other struggles in the Church—of women, say, or of the divorced. The truth is that pain, as Christ taught, is not a reason to question truth; it may indeed be a reason to embrace it.

But it must also be true that to dismiss the possibility of a loving union for homosexuals at all—to banish from the minds and hearts of countless gay men and women the idea that they, too, can find solace and love in one another—is to create the conditions for a human etiolation that no Christian community can contemplate without remorse. What finally convinced me of the wrongness of the Church's teachings was not that they were intellectually so confused, but that in the circumstances of my own life—and of the lives I discovered around me—they seemed so destructive of the possibilities of human love and self-realization. By crippling the potential for connection and growth, the Church's teachings created a dynamic that in practice led not to virtue but to pathology; by requiring the first lie in a human life, which would lead to an entire battery of others, they contorted human beings into caricatures of solitary eccentricity, frustrated bitterness, incapacitating anxiety—and helped perpetuate all the human wickedness and cruelty and insensitivity that such lives inevitably carry in their wake. These doctrines could not in practice do what they wanted to do: they could not both affirm human dignity and deny human love.

This truth is not an argument; it is merely an observation. But observations are at the heart not simply of the Church's traditional Thomist philosophy, but also of the phenomenological vision of the current pope. To observe these things, to affirm their truth, is not to oppose the Church, but to hope in it, to believe in it as a human institution that is yet the eternal vessel of God's love. It is to say that such lives as those of countless gay men and lesbians must ultimately affect the Church not because our lives are perfect, or without contradiction, or without sin, but because our lives are in some sense also the life of the Church.

I remember, in my own life, the sense of lung-filling exhilaration I felt as my sexuality began to be incorporated into my life, a sense that was not synonymous with recklessness or self-indulgence—although I was not immune from those things either—but a sense of being suffused at last with the possibility of being fully myself before those I loved and before God. I remember the hopefulness of parents regained and friendships restored in a life that, for all its vanities, was at least no longer premised on a lie covered over by a career. I remember the sense a few months ago in a pew in a cathedral, as I reiterated the same pre-Communion litany of prayers that I had spoken some twenty years earlier, that, for the first time, the love the Church had always taught that God held for me was tangible and redemptive. I had never felt it fully before; and, of course, like so many spiritual glimpses, I have rarely felt it since. But I do know that it was conditioned not on the possibility of purity, but on the possibility of honesty. That honesty is not something that can be bought or won in a moment. It is a process peculiarly prone to self-delusion and self-doubt. But it is one that, if it is to remain true to itself, the Church cannot resist forever. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Different Doctors

Kenneth Branagh's film career, as director and his own leading actor, divides sharply. There are the two Shakespeare films, *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*; there are the two others, *Dead Again*, a Movieland extravaganza about Movieland extravaganzas, and *Peter's Friends*, an old-fashioned weekend-in-the-country comedy updated. Now comes **Mary Shelley's Frankenstein** (TriStar). (His first venture without his wife, Emma Thompson. No role for her, really; still, in an odd way, I felt that she was missing.) *Frankenstein* deepens the schism in Branagh's career.

The split is not merely the difference between Shakespeare and others. It's that Branagh's experience with Shakespeare on the stage—very extensive considering that he's still quite young—seems to provide him with surety in filming Shakespeare. With other authors, Branagh's compass points grow fuzzy. His judgment of screenplays is wobbly, his directing loses distinction and his sense of humor dulls. Even worse, his sense of the ridiculous dims. *Frankenstein* has moments intended to be scary that are risible.

Once again, as with *Henry V*, Branagh took on a subject that had already been memorably filmed because he had his own view of it. He kept the author's name in the title, I suppose, to underscore greater fidelity to the original. (Francis Ford Coppola, co-producer of Branagh's film, did the same with his own film, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*.) Branagh apparently meant to emphasize Shelley's basic point. After Dr. Frankenstein has suffered because of his scientific daring, he writes to a friend:

> I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation on lifeless matter.... Learn from me, if not by precepts at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge.

Shelley's book, in a relatively crude way, is an early example of an argument familiar since Hiroshima: mankind is not equipped morally to handle its scientific discoveries.

But Shelley's purpose is almost utterly lost here. The film is so breathlessly rushing, so full of slapped-in characteristics and relationships, so bulgy with moments of passion that seem arbitrary pauses for romance, that the result is like a hard-breathing synopsis. This two-hour picture comes off as an attenuated storyboard for a four- or five-hour film that hasn't yet been made.

Outside of cornball action films, I've never seen a leading man run, simply run, so constantly as Branagh's Dr. Frankenstein does. Four out of five times that we cut to him, he's running somewhere, even if it's only around his large laboratory. And Branagh doesn't monopolize the running: he gives some to many of the others. In one sequence Frankenstein comes home to his estate outside Geneva on horseback, and instead of riding up to the door, he halts at the far edge of the huge lawn so that the shot can begin with his father, his sweetheart and others rushing across that lawn to him.

In contrast with the physical rushing is the static, dull dialogue, not much of it, I think, taken from the book. (The screenplay is by Steph Lady and Frank Darabont.) At one point his fiancée says to Frankenstein, "Can't you ever think of anyone besides yourself?" The hurried action and the leaden dialogue make for a push-me-pull-you toy throughout.

Everyone knows—or knows enough of—the story. The film follows the book, sort of. In fact, the last scene, suggested by the book's final pages, is more visually effective than the book—a double funeral pyre.

One of Branagh's triumphs in his Shakespeare films was his ability, in verse-speaking, to blend contemporary address with classical arch (as against Emma Thompson, who is much more thoroughly classical). That considerable gift can't be used here, of course; thus, outside Shakespeare, Branagh is left somewhat denuded. On his own, with prosy language, he lacks force. Perhaps he was drained by all the gymnastics of his role and the directing of it, but his Frankenstein is his weakest film performance.

Helena Bonham Carter, as his fiancée, tries bravely to give cohesion to what is really a series of quick sketches of a woman. Ian Holm, fine actor that he is, struggles similarly with Dr. Frankenstein père. Robert De Niro plays the Creature, but he didn't need to: anyone else could have worn the make-up and spoken the lines. (He doesn't get near Boris Karloff's pathos.) The one interesting performance is by John Cleese as a maverick medical professor—a pretty thorough transformation of the Cleese we all know and love.

The late eighteenth-century costumes

FILMS WORTH SEEING

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and settings, done under the production designer, Tim Harvey, are good enough, as is the cinematography by Roger Pratt. But there's one last disappointment. The score by Patrick Doyle, who did the wonderful music for the Shakespeare films, is commonplace. Maybe, like Branagh, he needs greater inspiration.

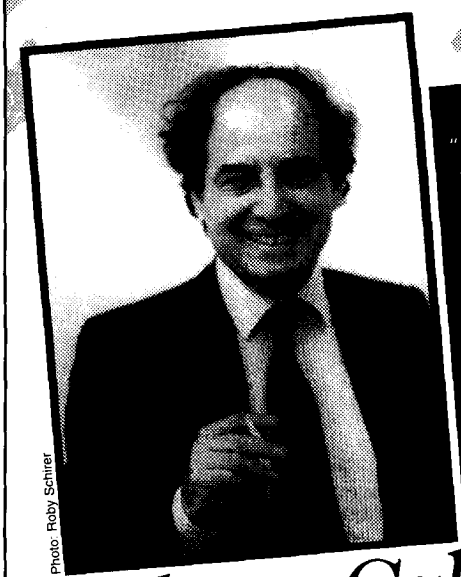
What lies ahead in Branagh's film career? More Shakespeare, I hope. Why is it unthinkable that, between his tours with his Shakespeare company, he should film one of the plays every couple of years or so? On the evidence so far, this would be more rewarding to the film world than his attempts to have something like an orthodox film career. Anyway, for his non-Shakespeare work in films, if he's to do more of it, he needs a firm, helpful producer. Not Francis Ford Coppola, who has been mucking up his own career lately.

Sometimes I think that you and I are the last sane people left in the world. For instance, if you and I were producers at Columbia Pictures, would we have greenlighted the filming of **The Road to Wellville**? Not very likely. Perhaps you would have read T.C. Boyle's novel; I haven't. But from the slimmest outline, we would have known that a comedy-romance about a turn-of-the-century health colony, with excretion as its god, was something more than a risky business. Renoir made a film of Feydeau's farce *On Purge Bébé*, about chamber pots and constipation, and we'd have known that without someone of at least vaguely comparable gifts at the helm of this new venture, it was doomed.

And we'd have been right. Alan Parker, whose career includes some light films (*Fame, Shoot the Moon*) and some heavy ones (*Mississippi Burning, Come See the Paradise*), managed to combine both strains here: his lightness is heavy. He wrote his own screenplay and concentrates so much on details of purgative processes—varied daintily with romantic interludes—that no overall view is fixed. This might have been a satire on American faddism, waxing rapidly in 1907 as the American bourgeoisie frantically sought ways to spend money and, at the same time, live longer. But Parker doesn't climb anywhere near the necessary overview.

So all we get is a luxe bustling sanitarium with people concentrating on vegetarian diets and their colons. It's *The Magic Mountain* as *The Magic Molehill*. Even Anthony Hopkins, playing Dr. John H. Kellogg, the founder of the place and the inventor of corn flakes, can't quite galvanize this sorry enterprise. Hopkins unleashes the energy that was latent in more reticent roles, and he affixes buck teeth and a curious American accent, but he can't save the picture singlehandedly.

Cracking Civilization's Secret Code



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He is weighed down additionally by the presence of the wimpy Matthew Broderick and the pinch-faced, pinch-voiced Bridget Fonda, as a married couple in search of intestinal bliss. They, plus Parker's iron hand, do the one thing this picture needed to avoid: they make it so unfunny that we're mostly conscious of the excretory details, not the intended satire of them.

But you and I could have foreseen all this. Why couldn't Columbia? •

Founding Fathers

BY ENRIQUE KRAUZE

Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico by Hugh Thomas

(Simon & Schuster, 812 pp., $30)

In the winter of 1847, during the tricentenary of the death of Hernán Cortés, the officers of the North American army of intervention quartered in Mexico City often visited the ancient Hospital de Jesús, founded by Cortés. They came to see the portrait of the Conquistador, known to them through a book, *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*, by William H. Prescott, which had been published in 1843. The historian Lucas Alamán, administrator of the Hospital and of Cortés's estate, willingly agreed to show the painting not only because of the "veneration" with which these men viewed it, but also because it was he who had sent his friend Prescott the copy of the portrait that appeared on the cover. What he surely did not confide to the officers, or even to Prescott, was the secret known only to himself and the Spanish ambassadors: that in 1836, somewhere in that building, Alamán had sealed behind the walls an urn containing the Conquistador's remains, which he had rescued in 1823 from a vengeful mob that wanted to burn them and scatter them to the winds.

Alamán and Prescott spent years writing about the same subject and published their works within months of each other. Alamán's *Disertaciones* went on to become a classic of Mexican history. *The History of the Conquest of Mexico* almost immediately became a classic of world history. The extraordinary success of Prescott's book in Mexico (two simultaneous editions, more than 50,000 copies) owed a great deal to the diligent labor of Alamán, who revised, annotated and, in certain passages of Latin text, translated his colleague's work. The founder of the Mexican Conservative Party and a quintessential Catholic conservative, Alamán had also questioned Prescott's attitude toward the Catholic liturgy, which elicited this revealing self-description from Prescott: "It is true," he wrote to Alamán a few days before war broke out between Mexico and the United States,

> you think I savor something of the old Puritan acid in my anti-Catholic structures. A Roman Catholic Dublin review speaks of it as doubtful from my writings whether I am Catholic or Protestant. A Baltimore Catholic Journal condemns me as a deist. The Madrid translator of "Ferdinand & Isabella" (Rector of the University of Madrid), condemns me for hostility to the Inquisition. So I think, between them all, I may pass for a very liberal Christian.

Alamán himself warmly agreed with this assessment. As for the rest, he knew of Prescott's opposition to the war and to its prelude, the annexation of Texas. And despite the historical humiliation that Alamán felt at the sight of "the hateful star-spangled banner" waving over the Palacio Nacional, he may have found solace in the paradoxical fact that it was a North American historian who had vindicated the figure of Cortés in the world.

In the world, but not in Mexico. The controversy between those who followed Alamán's lead and attempted to preserve the cultural, religious and political legacy of New Spain, and those who attacked it, proposing to break with the past and to adopt secular, liberal and republican cultural forms, was anything but academic. It was the essential ideological wound in Mexican history; and by the middle of the century it led to civil war. That struggle (called the War of Reform, 1858-1861) and its outcome (the French Intervention of 1862-1867) favored the ideological identification of Mexico with the Aztecs.

In mythological terms, and for purposes of legitimation, the new liberal, republican state presented its triumph over the conservatives and their allies, the French invaders, as a just reversal of history. As Benito Juárez and Porfirio Díaz raised statues to Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor, the rancorous hatred toward the Spanish conqueror Cortés grew. Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, a distinguished intellectual of the time, called him a "great outlaw," and went on to write that "only his good fortune, and the interests of Spain, could have placed him in the ranks of heroes, when his life was nothing more than a tissue of vile acts and betrayals ... of treachery, murder and cruelty." The conciliatory religious policy that was in effect throughout the long regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876-1910) tempered the animosity, and several good histories of the Conquest were published, all of them indebted to Prescott. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), with its popular, peasant currents, reopened the wound, sanctified the indigenist cause and demonized Cortés.

In the 1920s, Diego Rivera painted a syphilitic, deformed Cortés at the head of an insatiable horde of slavers blessed by the Cross. With greater subtlety José Clemente Orozco, another muralist, gave form to the Adam and Eve of Mestizo Mexico: the powerful, hieratic figures of Cortés and his lover, the translator La Malinche, their hands intertwined and at their feet the body of a dead Indian. According to Octavio Paz, this was a tragic composition:

> The annihilation [of] the dead Indian does not resolve the conflict, but inflames and exacerbates it. The annihilation [of] Cortés consists of his transformation into a sinister myth: the Father is turned into the Violator, the Founder into the Usurper, the Victor into the Murderer. The myth ... is torn apart by an insoluble contradiction: their marriage bed is the corpse of their victim. The myth ... does incessant battle against itself without ever achieving definitive victory or defeat. And for this reason the myth is sterile.

Not only sterile: it is also anachronistic, disintegrative and, in the final analysis, false. The "sinister myth" of Cortés, Paz continues in an essay published in 1985, "prevents us from seeing ourselves in our past and, above all, prevents the reconciliation of Mexico with its other half...." And so Paz concludes, appropriately and ringingly, that "Cortés, with all his greatness and all his defects, should be restored to his rightful place in history."

During the Columbus quincentenary, a new Alamán, the Mexican writer José Luis Martínez, began the work of restitution called for by Paz. He published a modern, well-documented and intelligent biography of the Conquistador. And a short while later, a new Prescott appeared. He is Hugh Thomas, and he has written a truly amazing book, *Conquest:*

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Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico. Might this book, at long last, dispel the sinister myth?

Prescott, in his own words, used the best of his "literary labor" to plow "true Castilian soil." Thomas followed the same path, and like Prescott, he first published a book on Spain, *The Spanish Civil War*; then, like Cortés, he moved on to Cuba and wrote *The Pursuit of Liberty*; and finally, like Prescott and Cortés, he landed in Mexico. He has chosen to study the most interesting and the most complex moment in Mexican culture, to rewrite what Prescott called the "memorable drama" of the Conquest of Mexico. The virtues of Thomas's book are many. It shows solid documentation and balanced judgment. In his great book on the Spanish Civil War, he demonstrated that history is neither white nor black; and here, too, he needed to clear the ground of received ideas and ideologies.

Prescott began by reconstructing the era of the Catholic sovereigns and ended by recreating the conquests of Mexico and Peru. He belonged to the group of exceptional American writers—Longfellow, Melville, Cooper, Irving—who opened themselves to an interest in the Spanish and Spanish-American worlds. In politics he was a Whig, a Federalist and an abolitionist. His readings and his aesthetic tastes tended naturally to romanticism. According to a critic in the *Edinburgh Review*, Prescott's sketches and landscapes, his spectacular scenes and heroic characters, did not pale by comparison to those of Walter Scott, or his battle scenes to those of Napier.

If Prescott's heart belonged to romanticism, however, his mind favored the Enlightenment and its erudition. He was a man of critical sense and considered judgment. Prescott's special need for these qualities was foreseen by Washington Irving when, in 1838, he "presented" his admiring colleague with the subject of *The Conquest of Mexico*: "one must devote a good deal of work, patient research and careful discrimination to it in order to find the truth and dissolve the magnificent *mirage* that encloses it." Suffering from a painful eye disease, Prescott traveled to Mexican lands only through books, documents and all the visual means at his disposal. While he was writing his history, he sent a daguerreotype to his friend Frances Inglis (the Marquesa Calderón de la Barca, author of *Life in Mexico*, a book that inspired Prescott), in order to obtain plates of Mexican landscapes. He was almost blind, but his greatest virtue was to have seen the opportunity to narrate once again the story of the Conquest of Mexico.

Alamán admired the "abundance of information" in Prescott's book, which, in fact, was based on Mexican, Spanish and general sources. Among the first, the most outstanding were at least four codices (collected in *Antiquities of Mexico* by Lord Kingsborough); several documents and manuscripts that would be edited in 1856 by another friend and correspondent of Prescott's, the bibliographer Joaquín García Icazbalceta; works by members of the indigenous nobility, such as Ixtlilxóchitl and Alvarado Tezozomoc, who did not personally experience the Conquest; and even the Municipal Ordinances issued by Cortés in 1524, which were provided by Alamán. The Spanish sources were much more extensive. They included a good part of the historical bibliography on the Indies, ranging from the best-known works, such as the *Cartas de Relación* (Narrative Letters) by Cortés and the writings of classic chroniclers like Gómara and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, to more recent general histories composed in the eighteenth century.

This foundation determined the nature of the work. Prescott saw the pre-Hispanic history and culture of Mexico through the eyes of its conquerors and colonizers, which, even in the most compassionate cases, somehow obstructed the vision needed to understand the drama in all its dimensions: the vision of the conquered. Despite the spirit of

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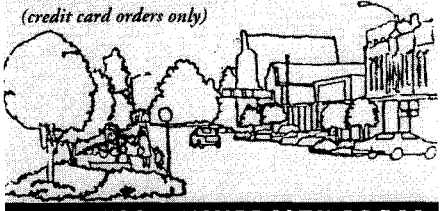
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understanding and eventual sympathy with which he treated "Aztec civilization," Prescott did not hide his aversion to those "barbaric" peoples. (The adjective appears constantly throughout his text.) A child of his time, Prescott believed firmly in linear history, and he conceived of Cortés as the envoy of a civilization that was, if not redeeming, at least superior.

Hugh Thomas may doubt the unfailing progress of civilizations, but his own work testifies to the undeniable progress in the historical study of Mexico. Thanks in part to the indigenist vogue adopted by the Mexican Revolution, impressive advances have been made in our knowledge of ancient Mexico. Thomas has made exhaustive use of this scholarship, but his work is distinguished by its insistence, especially when compared to Prescott, on the use of primary sources in his treatment of the indigenous world. Two examples among the many that Prescott could not consult are the sixteenth-century *Florentine Codex*, perhaps the richest indigenous work concerning the daily life of the Mexica, and the *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España* (History of the Indies of New Spain), composed in the middle of the sixteenth century by the Dominican friar Diego Durán, a man who lived in Mexico from childhood, spoke with eyewitnesses to the time preceding the Conquest, and reconstructed with almost modern insight the tortured psychology of Montezuma, the Mexica emperor.

Thomas's meticulous knowledge of secondary Spanish sources allows him to enrich his perspective, but here, too, the abundance of information is startling. His investigations in the Archivo de Indias in Seville led Thomas to several rare and unedited documents, and to some significant discoveries—for example, that Cortés left Spain in 1506 and not 1504, as had been believed. Along with materials unknown in Prescott's time (the *Codex Ramírez*, a history of pre-Hispanic Mexico compiled by a Jesuit in the sixteenth century and discovered in 1856; and the dispersed collection of Conway, an English engineer who gathered a rich array of documents about Cortés's life in post-Conquest times, among others), what stands out are the extraordinary testimonies by almost 300 of Cortés's companions in accounts or *relaciones* of their achievements and service, which either had been disdained by Prescott or were unknown to him, and the 6,000 pages that comprise the incomplete "action of impeachment" brought against the Conquistador in 1529. Prescott rejected some of these materials as confused and unworthy. As if they were an abandoned mine to which one applies modern methodology, Thomas extracts from them extremely valuable historical ore.

At first glance, on the basis of the table of contents, the two *Conquests* are similar in rhythm and dramatic structure. They begin with a view of the indigenous world, return to the expansionist, convulsive Spain of the years following the final victory of the Catholic kings over the Moors in 1492, focus on Cortés in his youth, and finally concentrate on his great enterprise: the landing in Veracruz on April 21, 1519; the march to Tenochtitlán, with its thousands of revelations and hazards, which took place between June 3 and November 8, 1519; the encounter with Montezuma on November 8—Thomas calls it the "true discovery of America"; the political domination, almost the sorcery, exercised by a small group of Castilians over an immense, bewitched population; the awakening of the Aztecs, or Mexica, after the massacre of the Great Temple in mid-May 1520, when they finally began to realize that the Spanish were not gods; the tragic death of Montezuma, repudiated and stoned by his own people at the end of June 1520, as the Spanish were retreating through the lands of their indigenous allies; the siege by water of Tenochtitlán almost a year later, on May 30, 1521; the war, pestilence and famine; the fall and final destruction of that "New Venice" on August 13, 1521. Both Prescott and Thomas dedicate a brief final chapter to the later life of Cortés until his death in Castilleja de la Cuesta, near Seville, on December 2, 1547.

After just a few pages, however, the reader can detect essential differences, not only in the tone—epic, poetic, often digressive in Prescott; clear, direct and restrained in Thomas—but also in the narrative texture. The distinction originates in the profound differences in information, and in this case it favors Thomas. What Prescott recreates or evokes with the colors of his emotive or literary imagination, without necessarily moving away from the truth, Thomas fills with factual density: an avalanche, sometimes dizzying, sometimes unhurried, of acts, persons, statements. There are scenes that correct or sharpen Prescott's romantic sketches, and there are many scenes that are simply not in Prescott's book. It is as if a canvas by Delacroix slowly began to reveal an underlay of a different work, so multitudinous and overwhelming in its detail that it seems to have been painted by Brueghel.

"The domestic establishment of Montezuma," writes Prescott, "was on the same scale of barbaric splendor as every thing else about him. He could boast as many wives as are found in the harem of

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an Eastern sultan." He goes on to describe, with more fantasy than substance, the "mysteries of culinary science" that Montezuma enjoyed. How could Prescott understand—for he had never tasted it—why the emperor relished *chocolatl* ("this beverage, if so it could be called")? And he concludes with a long digression describing "the luscious fruits of the tropics, plucked, the day previous, from the green groves of the *tierra caliente*...." Alamán had already pointed out the romantic excesses in the passage: many fruits that flourish in Mexico, such as oranges and bananas, arrived after the Conquest. Thomas moderates this, however, by eliminating the Oriental references: Montezuma had a legitimate wife, other "important wives," and "numerous concubines"; at "meals he tasted a few of the countless dishes" that were served to him. According to what can be inferred from indigenous sources not consulted by Prescott, it seems the daily life of a *Tlatoani*, or emperor, was closer to Seneca's prescriptions than to those of the *Arabian Nights*.

One of the most dramatic moments in the Conquest occurred when Cortés climbed the pyramid of Huitzilopochtli and knocked down the gods of the Mexica in early 1520. It recalls the biblical tale of Moses smashing the golden calf. Here Prescott adopts a skeptical posture, combined with his "old Puritan acid." He considers it "improbable because it is quixotic" and describes it without much detail. In Thomas, the episode takes on its true dimensions. Based on the evidence of Andrés de Tapia, a close companion of Cortés whose testimony of those days is one of Thomas's great discoveries, we discover that Cortés planned events carefully, that he sent Tapia himself to explore the site, that later he "followed Tapia up 'to pass the time of day' ":

> ...and asked the priests for the immediate establishment there of effigies of Christ and of the Virgin Mary, and the washing of the walls to free them of blood. The priests laughed and said that, if such a thing were done, the whole empire, not just Tenochtitlán, would rise against the Spaniards. Cortés sent one of his men to go where Montezuma was being held and to ensure that he was well-guarded. He also ordered some thirty or forty men to come to the temple. But even before these had arrived, the *Caudillo* had begun to break the idols: "Annoyed by what he had heard, he seized a bar which was there and began to hit the stone idols. And I promise on my word as a gentleman, and I swear by God that it is true, that it appeared to me that the Marquis [i.e. Cortés] gave a super-human leap and balanced himself taking the bar so that it hit the eyes of the idol and so removed

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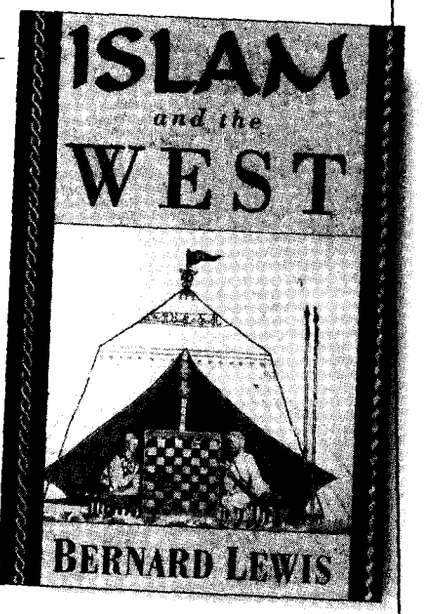

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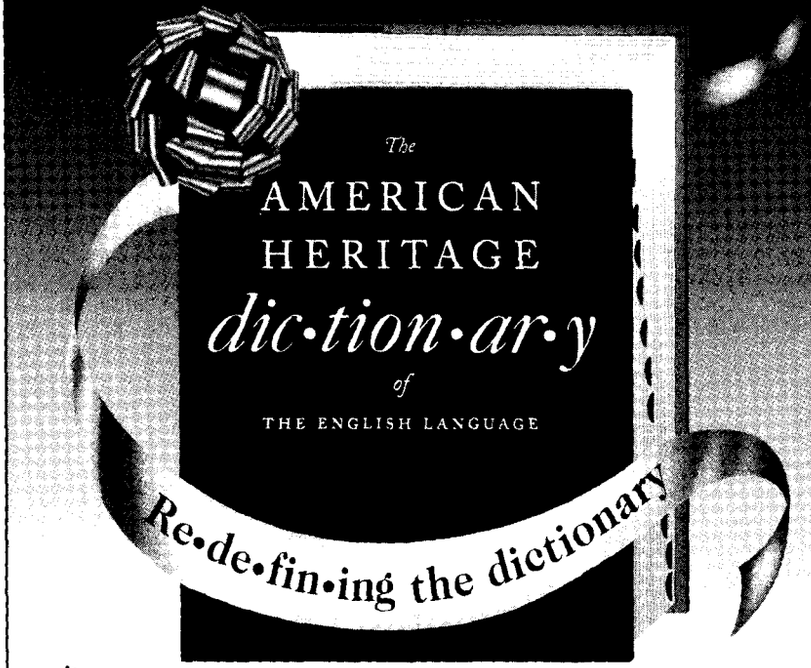

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the gold mask, saying: 'Something must be done for the Lord.'"

After his expulsion from Tenochtitlán, in the most somber moment of his undertaking, many of the peoples allied to Cortés began to desert or to resist the Spaniards. One of them had its seat of government in Tepeaca. Although what happened there appears in Cortés's own *Cartas de Relación*, Prescott ignored it. In his history, it is a name and nothing more. In Thomas, however, Tepeaca is synonymous with an awful battle, and with an aftermath even more horrible, if that is possible, than the two immense slaughters already perpetrated by the Spaniards: the massacre at Cholula in October 1519, ordered by Cortés, and the one at the Great Temple, ordered, in the absence of Cortés, by his lieutenant Pedro de Alvarado, in which thousands of Mexica nobles were killed. In Tepeaca, the Spaniards and their allies the Tlaxcaltecas murdered, in an act of vengeance, warning and punishment, some 15,000 men, reduced women and children to slavery and branded them on their cheeks. Some Tepeacanos were torn to pieces by dogs. The corpses, it must be noted, were not cleared away. They were served at the great banquet held by the Tlaxcaltecas and encouraged by Cortés, at which a few Castilian diners savored a Mexica liver.

One of Thomas's great virtues lies in his parallel accounts of Spanish and Mexican atrocities. He does not fall, however, into the easy demagoguery of cultural relativism. Without going to the extremes reached by Prescott, for whom "the vicious institutions of the Aztecs offered the best apology for their conquest," he indicates at the start that "in numbers, in the elevated sense of ceremony which accompanied the theatrical shows involved, as in its significance in the official religion, human sacrifice in Mexico was unique."

Corrections, refinements, discoveries, but above all infinite detail: the breed of dogs that came on the expedition ("probably mastiffs or Irish hunting dogs"); the precise genealogy of dozens of conquistadors; the complete inventory of cargo carried by the fleet; memorable phrases ("Come, we lack nothing," Cortés exclaimed on the day following his defeat); the ingredients in the salve used by the Spaniards to cure their wounds; the erotic urgings of Cortés who, in full retreat, "took to bed a certain Doña Francisca," the daughter of King Cacama; the macabre tactics of psychological warfare employed by the Mexica (heads tied to a foot walking past the Spaniards' windows at night). At the crucial juncture of the Battle of Tenochtitlán, this texture of facts creates an almost cinematic effect.

How could a small army of a few hundred Castilian soldiers subdue millions of Mexica and their powerful military theocracy? This has been one of the great historical mysteries. Prescott approached it with the historiographical notions of his day: a more advanced culture subjugates, and therefore elevates, "the barbaric nations that necessarily live in a more confused manner than civilized man." More important, Prescott transformed the mystery into romantic drama. Thomas does not begin with any theory of history. He relies instead on evidence, which, in its very accumulation, unravels the romantic fabric and depicts reality with greater faithfulness.

The Castilians won primarily because their military and technical resources were infinitely superior. Their adversaries feared horses and the "fierce lightning" of their harquebuses and cannon. They, the Mexica, used arrows instead of lances; but their limitations were above all cultural. They did not know, and they could not conceive of, long wars of attrition, of combat at a distance, of sneak attacks or nocturnal raids, and least of all, of siege by water. They did not wage war to kill, but to take prisoners and offer them in sacrifice. This ritual detail saved Cortés from certain death on at least two occasions. The Castilians, by contrast, had a centuries-long repertoire of warfare behind them, from Troy to the Reconquest. In no area was the historical isolation of the Mexica more costly than in military matters.

Another equally important factor was the internecine war among the indigenous nobility. The speed with which Cortés detected the hatred against the Mexica, and the Machiavellian astuteness with which he exploited it for his own ends, are well known. Even with all his cultural and technological advantages, if Cortés had not been able to count on the Tlaxcaltecas, the Conquest would have been unthinkable. And if Cuitláhuac and Cuauhtémoc—the last two Mexica *Tlatoanis*—had been able to persuade the powerful Tarasco kingdom to support them, the Conquest would have been impossible. In that case we may imagine that, following the death of Cortés, the Spanish Empire would have attacked again but this time would have encountered a united enemy that had partially mastered the new technology (the Aztecs had already adapted metal and obsidian heads to Toledan lances) and, most important, was led by a *Tlatoani* who knew that the Spaniards were mortal, not divine. Then the Conquest would have been delayed for years or decades, and it would have probably taken on an unexpected configuration similar, Thomas suggests, to Meiji Japan.

One more thing that determined the outcome was the smallpox epidemic: viruses favored the Spanish cause. Still, if there is a master key in Thomas's book to explaining the mystery, it is the relationship between Cortés and Montezuma. Prescott's book, with a subtitle that refers only to Cortés, considers Montezuma an Oriental despot, a "Tartar" to be exact. Having been a priest and a warrior in his youth, Montezuma displayed in maturity "a refinement tinctured, it may be added, with an effeminacy unknown to his martial predecessors," which recalls "Alexander, after he was infected by the manners of Persia," as mentioned by Livy. Thomas, by contrast, relying on vast documentation and an immense bibliography on the subject, carefully describes each moment, each nuance, in the psychological tragedy of Montezuma.

Beginning with Cortés's landing, the narrative returns again and again to Tenochtitlán, where the melancholy *Tlatoani* confirms the ineluctable end of his empire, which he had long foreseen, feared and read in a macabre conjunction of dreams, prophecies and evil omens that had begun to take on reality. Montezuma believed that the same fatal wheel of history that had doomed the Toltecas and the ancient inhabitants of Teotihuacan also doomed him. "He must have returned to enjoy what is his," Montezuma is reported to have said, "for I have only borrowed this throne, this seat and majesty." Prescott states Montezuma's identification of Cortés with the return of the god Quetzalcóatl, but he does not emphasize it. Thomas, on the other hand, delves into the practical significance of the myth that Cortés manipulated to perfection.

In the eyes of Montezuma's ambassadors, the Spaniards were gods, or *teules*, whom they could not face, for "we are nothing compared to them." The gods had abandoned Montezuma. Citing the indispensable Durán, Thomas notes that Montezuma reproached the gods for having brought their people to such a dreadful fate, and

> he went out into the city and wept in public, abundantly, over the arrival of these foreigners. He begged the gods, the familiar gods, to have pity on the poor, the orphans, the aged, and those who would surely soon be widows. He then drew blood from his ears, arms, and shins, and offered it to the gods in order to show his innocence and the anguish he felt at the arrival of the Spaniards.

Thomas argues that, following their

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encounter, Cortés devised the brilliant idea of holding the *Tlatoani* "hostage." Montezuma would rule the Mexica and Cortés would rule Montezuma. The concept is useful for understanding the relationship of growing dependency, the "surrender of self," the disconcerting affection that Montezuma felt toward Cortés. According to Tapia, he came to "love him as if he were his brother." It also helps to reveal Cortés's feelings for his victim: there was contempt (he often referred to him as a "dog"), but there was also curiosity, and respect for his advice (the people must be treated not "with love but with fear"), and even a strange fondness growing out of the many hours they spent playing games of chance or engaging in conversations that have reached us only in shadowy versions.

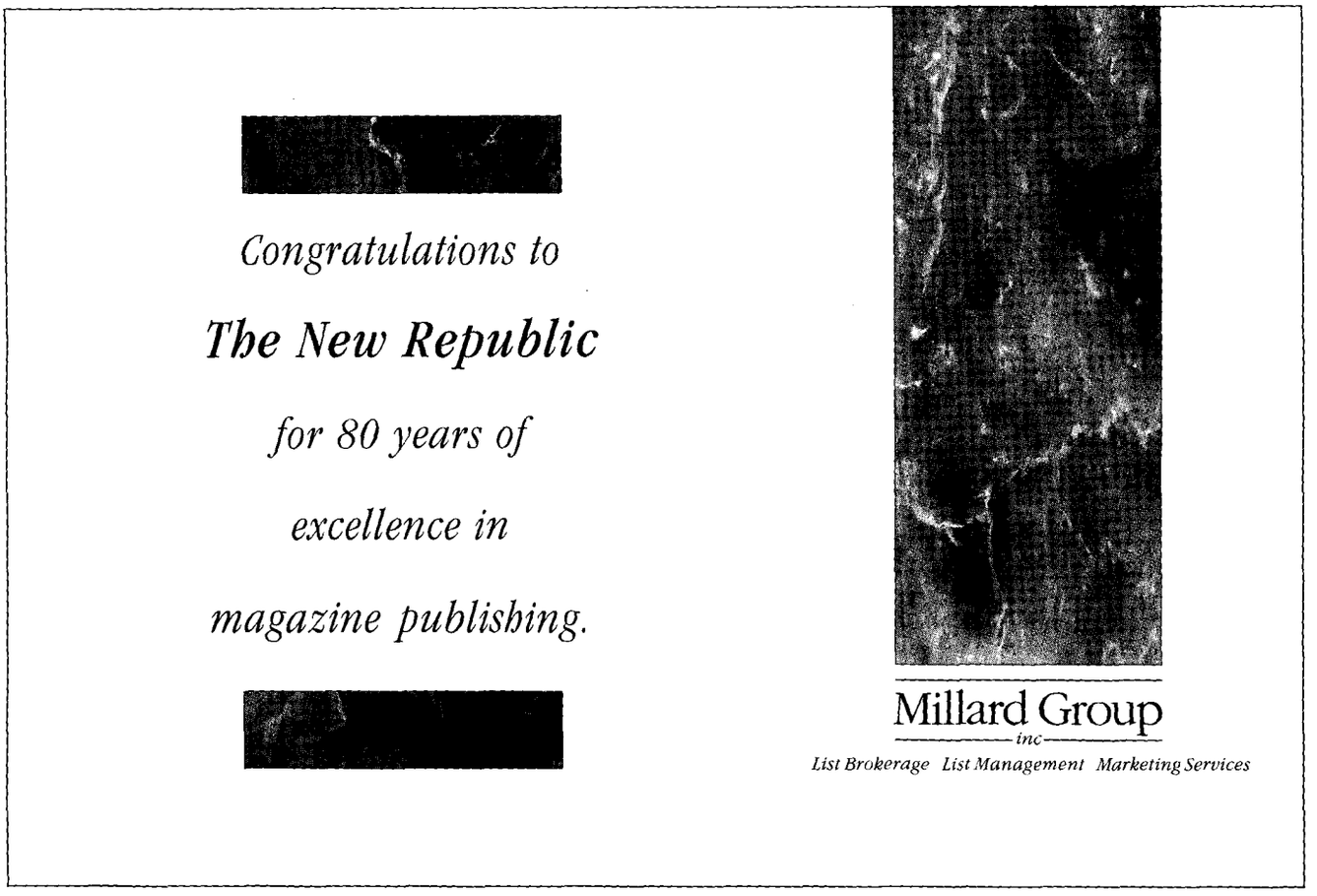
Thomas stresses the slow, belated awakening of Montezuma as he dares to doubt, to listen to his most radical advisers, to not accept willingly his formal vassalage to the Spanish sovereign, but he believes that Cortés "mesmerised" Montezuma "to the end (perhaps particularly at the end, when he had no one else to turn to)." A mysterious convergence united them. Each wanted to enter the thoughts of the other, to decipher the other. Before he died, Montezuma entrusted his daughters to Cortés, who kept his word and protected them, especially Doña Isabel, whose Indian name was Tecuichpo, with whom he had a daughter, Leonor Cortés.

"Hostage" is the correct word, not only to explain Cortés's strategy and the love-hate relationship that he established with Montezuma, but also to describe the immobility that this absolute monarch, "exceptionally superstitious, even for a Mexican," imposed on his people. They, in turn, imprisoned by an ethic closed to any improvisation and by a paralyzing respect for their ruler, could not react. Before he was a captive of Cortés, Montezuma was a captive of his own cosmogony. In a kind of gift, he responded to the conquistadors with the insecurity and the sense of insignificance that the Mexica felt before their gods.

Can one speak, then, of the suicide of Aztec civilization? Suicide as a supreme sacrifice, and not as a ritual offering, supposes at least a vague awareness of one's own individuality. Following the fall of Tenochtitlán, the tens of thousands of Mexica who threw themselves, with their wives and children, into the canals of the city, were perhaps performing the first act of appropriation of Western culture. They committed suicide because they had awakened from the cosmogonic nightmare to which they had been reduced by the taking hostage of Montezuma, and that awakening was intolerable.

From the moment that he obeyed the first omen, Montezuma opened a kind of historical vacuum. The fierce warrior who had extended the borders of his empire placed himself in a position that was strange to him: a position of waiting. Cortés was the man who came at the appointed hour and filled the gap. The *how* of his achievement can be found in both histories, and even today it may be more moving and vivid to read about it in Prescott; but the *why* appears with greater clarity in Thomas.

Prescott passes very quickly over the youth of Cortés, and barely pauses for his years of apprenticeship in Hispaniola and Cuba (1506-1519). He is less interested in understanding or explaining Cortés than in recreating his saga. Thomas, on the other hand, picks up a biographical trail that predicts the future conquistador: the historical turbulence of Medellín, the city in the province of Extremadura where Cortés was born in 1482, and the political turbulence of his family, more inclined to independent military ventures than to a courtier's obedience to the Count of Medellín and to the Crown. He enjoyed a military inheritance from his father and an intellectual inheritance from his mother. Cortés studied law, grammar and Latin in Salamanca and pursued various



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occupations, from acolyte to notary's assistant, which brought invaluable experience to his undertaking the Conquest. He had contact with the vanishing Arabic and Jewish cultures, and in this way developed, as did most of his companions, who were of Andalusian origin, a certain sensitivity to alien peoples and ideas.

In the years 1504-06, when historians thought he was already in the Indies, he lived in the sumptuous city of Valladolid, at a moment of exciting change, and he dreamed of changing his condition of impoverished noble into that of a great lord, not so much valuing gold, though that was certainly a consideration, as "honor and glory." And Cortés's subsequent vicissitudes in the Indies are no less significant. He was a notary, a magistrate, the first cattle owner in Cuba and finally the *Caudillo*—the word was used in the orders he received—of the third expedition to the promising lands that two Spanish captains had previously explored with no great success.

In essence, the Cortés of Prescott and the Cortés of Thomas are similar. "The great feature in his character," claims Prescott, "was constancy of purpose." Thomas documents this same trait on countless occasions: Cortés breaks with the governor of Cuba; sinks his ships in Veracruz; advances without ever retreating; overcomes the doubtful, the fearful or the treasonous; is not dissuaded by Montezuma's envoys during the march to Mexico; quells the Spanish expedition that came to find him on May 28, 1520; and does not weaken when faced with defeat in Tenochtitlán. For Prescott, Cortés is a "knight-errant in the literal sense of the word," and at the same time a great general who, with the scantiest resources imaginable, "brought together the most miscellaneous collection of mercenaries who ever fought under one standard." He admires his "versatility," his "polemic talents," the "tincture of scholarship" in his words and his deeds. He denies that he was cruel, "at least not cruel as compared with most of those who followed his iron trade." He passes over his worldly character, praises his spirit of camaraderie, and laments his religious fanaticism.

The Cortés of Thomas is more of a Renaissance figure. He is not a knight errant but a discoverer greedy for lands, new sights, horizons. And although he built brigantines, planned the naval siege and invented a rudimentary tank, Thomas considers him to have been not only a great soldier, but also a "supreme politician." He is Machiavelli's Prince in action: examining what other people are thinking, dissimulating his own thoughts, avoiding violence whenever possible, never despairing of diplomacy, taking advantage of the smallest opportunities to strengthen his position, suborning if he cannot persuade, intimidating if he cannot suborn, eliminating if he cannot intimidate. Naturally, Thomas's Cortés is crueler than Prescott's, but his violence is always a means and not an end. Thomas does not criticize Cortés's missionary zeal, but he does deem it reactive, increasing as he became more aware of his opponents' deep religiosity.

Tlatoani means, in Nahuatl, "the man endowed with a voice," "the man endowed with the word." Cortés was, in a strange sense, a perfect *Tlatoani*. His spontaneous statements, his Latin quotations, his religious preachings are always surprising. His speeches before battle recall (I am not exaggerating) the speeches of Pericles. Cortés saw himself in the figure of Caesar and, like him, he wrote an autobiography while on campaign. Thomas, it must be said, does not honor this aspect of Cortés. Despite the availability of the *Cartas de Relación* and other documents in which one can hear Cortés speaking, Thomas's book omits his voice almost entirely.

Cortés, both Prescott's and Thomas's, is the historical antithesis of Montezuma. While one waits, the other advances, impelled by his own education and character, in search of "honor and glory" and gold, drawn like a magnet to the symmetrical weakness of his opponent, driven not by a superior civilization but by a culture more self-confident, more self-aware, more interested in discovering new lands and horizons. "Cortés," wrote Prescott, "was not a vulgar conqueror. He did not conquer from the mere ambition of conquest. If he destroyed the ancient capital of the Aztecs, it was to build up a more magnificent capital on its ruins." Thomas would probably subscribe to the entire paragraph except for the comparison that favors the new capital.

In addition to the construction of a new city with the stones of the old one, several other towns and cities were established. Cortés sent, and in some cases led, expeditions of conquest in every direction, from Michoacán in 1522 to present-day Guatemala and Honduras in 1524. It was also in 1524 that twelve Franciscans came to the territory at his request, the first of the brotherhood who in so many senses established Christian spirituality in Mexico. Obsessed by the memory of the extermination of the Indians in the Caribbean, he regulated in a paternal way the personal labor performed by the Indians and ordered the Castilians to bring their wives and settle permanently in the new lands. For a few years he ruled the conquered territories as an absolute monarch, but he respected the economic customs of the Indians, as Montezuma had advised him to, and attempted tc

Courtesy of la Escuela Nacional Preparatoria (San Ildefonso)

HERNÁN CORTÉS AND LA MALINCHE BY JOSÉ CLEMENTE OROZCO, C. 1922

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

The History Standards

When the new National Standards for American History were released a couple of weeks ago, there were some indignant—and alarming—comments. We heard that the standards are politically correct "garbage," which elevate the founding of the John Muir Society over the creation of the U.S. Constitution. We heard, too, that the standards are destined to become "official knowledge," and that when they do, American students will no longer learn to be proud of their country. Is this true? Are George Washington and Abraham Lincoln about to go the way of Christopher Columbus?

The same set of facts can lend itself to different historical interpretations.

Admittedly, the history standards have some serious flaws. They also offer much that is worthwhile. Issued under the name "Exploring the American Experience," the standards are part of an effort to establish "world-class" national standards in core subjects. They are there to serve as models—not mandates—for states wishing to set their own standards. This is in accordance with the Goals 2000 legislation, which was passed this spring.

The first piece of good news about the history standards is that they are substantive and demanding. This should reassure people who fear that any so-called national standards will shy away from demanding real knowledge or skills (the way many of the outcomes-based education [OBE] goals do). Students are expected to absorb a great deal of information about U.S. history, and they are also asked to use what they have learned to think about historical issues. For example, the standard dealing with the Constitution goes way beyond asking students to learn its provisions: They are expected to analyze the other plans presented at the Constitutional Convention and discuss the continuing relevance of issues debated by the Convention participants.

Are the standards marred by political correctness? They give more attention to groups—like African-Americans or Native people—that were largely ignored by traditional history, but that in itself is not a problem. This change in emphasis reflects a rethinking of history to include more social history. And, more important, it is an attempt to correct previous distortions.

When I was in school, U.S. history was largely political history, and groups that did not play major roles in politics were nearly invisible. This distortion was especially unfortunate in the case of African-Americans. They have been in our country from the beginning and have played an enormous role in shaping our democracy even when they themselves were disenfranchised. This is something that we are just beginning to look at squarely. Creating standards that reflect this recognition is not a matter of political correctness but of accuracy. On the other hand, there is no question that the picture of U.S. history the new standards present is grim.

The same set of facts can lend itself to different historical interpretations. Those who want to show that American history is largely negative can do it by taking current standards of behavior and applying them to the past, when those standards were not in effect in the U.S.—or anywhere else. Then, our history looks like a history of oppression. This is unfair, and these same people do not apply current standards when they are judging the histories of other countries or groups.

But if we apply the standards of the time to our history, we see that the U.S. has always been remarkable for having democratic ideals and institutions and attempting to live by them. Seen through this lens, U.S. history is a dramatic story of progress, a 225-year struggle in which various groups have fought to achieve the rights promised to U.S. citizens—and been largely successful.

Who's right? The people who think that U.S. history should portray a rotten country with phony ideals? Or the ones who think that, though the U.S. has made some tragic mistakes, its story is positive and even inspiring? Historians and philosophers can argue over this question forever, but I think the best way to decide is by the fact that few people who've come to the U.S. have wanted to leave while millions have wanted to come—and still want to. Our history standards should reflect that fact, and the standards contained in "Exploring the American Experience" do not.

Fortunately, the new standards are not set in stone. Nor will they ever become "official knowledge." Federal law does not require that states use them, and if states are smart, they will not adopt the history standards without making some basic changes.

The next step is for knowledgeable historians to critique and rework the standards to provide the balance that is lacking. Teachers should also be provided with materials to help them restore the balance in the classroom. The standards are a good first draft of an extremely difficult assignment. But they are not good enough to be the basis for teaching American history to our kids...yet.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1994 by Albert Shanker.

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make them compatible with Spanish forms of governance. He imported cattle, sheep, pigs, mares. He planted sugar cane, wheat, mulberries for silk. He found and worked the first mines. He built (with independence in mind?) cannon and fortifications. He discovered the Gulf of California, and he proposed to the Spanish emperor that he expand his domain, perhaps as far as China; his fixed idea was to populate, "industrialize" and evangelize the vast and varied territory that he himself named Nueva España, or New Spain.

This Cortés, the Founder, appears in both histories, but he does not appear in the minds of Mexicans today. In the heart of Mexico City, the oldest civic monument, built in 1887, recalls the torture to which Cortés subjected the valiant Cuauhtémoc in a desperate and useless attempt to force him to reveal the exact spot where he had buried the imperial treasure. Having tried earlier to hang himself from a tree, the unfortunate *Tlatoani* endured the burning of his hands and feet, was left a cripple, and years later was killed under Cortés's orders. These and other atrocities are in Prescott and Thomas, and, along with the inherent cruelty of the Conquest, which is learned by every Mexican child in school, they explain the stubborn persistence of the myth. "Our admiration for the hero," wrote Manuel Orozco y Berra, a prudent nineteenth-century historian, "but never our affection for the conquistador." The subsequent fate of that urn containing Cortés's bones speaks for itself. It was rediscovered almost by accident in 1947, and it is still there, forgotten. No street, no statue, no city dares to call itself by his damnable name; and only a few spots (the Sea of Cortés in California, the Cortés Pass between the volcanoes, the palace of Cortés in Cuernavaca) mark his route.

"The myth was born of ideology," Paz wrote, "and only criticism of the ideology can dissipate it." But there is something more powerful than ideology, and that is history. In our day, the "sinister myth" of Cortés has not grown any deeper, and it has not been resolved. It is vanishing. In the general twilight of ideologies, the memory of the Mexican people moves farther and farther away from the trauma of the Conquest that aroused and confronted their forebears. Few complain anymore about "the evils brought by the Spaniards." (A recent exception are the guerrilla Indians in Chiapas.) But more important than the erosive effect of time is the sediment of truth in time. The actual historical experience of Mexico yields a verdict that moves the myth closer to truth, and it is that the conquest of Mexico was the terrible drama narrated by Prescott and Thomas, but it was also, as the renowned Mexican historian Luis González maintains, a conquest in the constructive sense of the term, an act that won the good will, and even the love, of the conquered.

Unlike all the other areas of America, where the indigenous population was exterminated or segregated, the great peculiarity of Mexico lies in the long process of convergence of Spanish culture and indigenous cultures, the long process that is known as *mestizaje*. If this historical experience in Mexico were to be reflected in a single image, it would be the image of Montezuma and Cortés, talking, learning from one another, deciphering one another. And if it were to be painted in a mural, it would not be Orozco's mural. Cortés and La Malinche would be accompanied not by a dead Indian, but by a living Mestizo.

Prescott did not dispel the sinister myth. Neither will Thomas. Books are not usually that powerful. Their histories render a more humble, but no less necessary, service: a retelling, as one retells the stories of Exodus, the Trojan War or the Crusades, of the great and marvelous events that occurred on the cruel altiplano of Mexico, which was once the stage for "magical things . . . never heard, or seen, or dreamed of."

—translated by Edith Grossman

ENRIQUE KRAUZE's latest book, *Siglo de Caudillos*, won the Comillas Prize for biography in Spain. He is at work on a history of Mexico.

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BY STEPHEN OWEN

The Classic of Changes: A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi translated by Richard John Lynn

(Columbia University Press, 602 pp., $19.95)

For those to whom the name is familiar, the *I Ching* probably conjures up images of an unkempt apartment in the late 1960s or early 1970s, draped with pillows and Madras bedspreads, and filled with incense or other aromatic smokes. In that assemblage of images the *I Ching* has achieved a minor duration in our times. It was first an archaic Chinese divination manual, then it was transformed into an important philosophical text in the Confucian tradition, and now it has resurfaced, by an odd twist of fate, in the flotsam and jetsam of late twentieth-century American culture.

The oldest layer of the *I Ching* or *Classic of Changes* probably dates from early in the first millennium B.C. Diviners would cast milfoil stalks to build up a hexagram, a layered pattern of six broken (yin) or unbroken (yang) lines. The mathematical possibilities are 2^6, yielding the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching*. In the early period, each of these hexagrams had a name and a rudimentary lore of interpretive phrases that guided the diviner in telling his client what the "situation" was and what the best course of action might be.

Apart from the spurious tradition that Confucius (551-479 B.C.) wrote early commentaries and treatises on the work, the *I Ching* was not central to his social and ethical concerns. But as the Confucian school took shape in the centuries after Confucius's death, the *I Ching* gradually was accepted as one of the texts of ancient wisdom, and it was given a place among what were to become the Confucian Classics. To the layers of interpretation that already had grown up around the core of the work were added essays on the book's philosophical significance. The Confucian tradition of moral philosophy had acquired a text that was no longer a mere divination manual; it was a "physics," an explanation of the laws of change by which nature and human society worked.

The layers of interpretation and the early essays became the fixed text of the classic by the third century B.C. Then there began a process of adding more commentary, and commentary on the commentaries, and new commentaries that rejected all the old commentaries, and commentaries on those new commentaries, a process that has lasted through the present day. As in biblical

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studies, the shelves of libraries groan under the weight of a good collection of commentaries on the *I Ching*. I am told that in China there is a resurgence of interest in the *I Ching*, which promises new loads for crowded library shelves.

This has immense historical interest for the student of Chinese culture, but it does not explain why the *I Ching* might still be of interest to a contemporary American readership. We presume it is so because translations of the book can be found in bookstores everywhere, even bookstores of relatively modest size. These institutions are not known for making a charitable sacrifice of shelf space in order to promote ancient Chinese literature. The reason has something to do with the image of the *I Ching* in our own culture. That, too, is a history, but a mercifully short one.

Since its publication in 1950 in the Bollingen Series of Princeton University Press, the most widely read English version of the *I Ching* has been Cary Baynes's translation of Richard Wilhelm's German translation. This version carried a foreword written by no less a personage than Carl Jung. Jung's description of the "ancient Chinese mind" was an easy inversion of what he saw as dominant, but problematic, characteristics of "the Western mind." (When anyone starts talking about "the Western mind" or "the ancient Chinese mind," it's time to begin edging toward the door.) If the West believes in causality, wrote Jung, the Chinese were interested in chance. "While the Western mind carefully sifts, weighs, selects, classifies, isolates, the Chinese picture of the moment encompasses everything down to the minutest nonsensical detail, because all of the ingredients make up the observed moment." Jung proceeded elegantly to explain this so-called Chinese view of things as "synchronicity," concluding a few pages later: "My argument as outlined above has of course never entered a Chinese mind." Not only does Jung claim to understand the "Chinese mind," he claims to understand it better than the "Chinese mind" itself. His argument, in fact, had very little to do with China and a great deal to do with German intellectual history; but it was a characteristic use of China as a blank screen on which to project speculative cultural alternatives.

The Wilhelm/Baynes translation also contained a handy appendix, "On Consulting the Oracle," with instructions for the procedure using yarrow stalks or—if no yarrow stalks were handy, which they seldom were—coins. My own copy is the December 1969 printing, by which time it had gone through three editions and thirteen printings. The copy in my local bookstore is the twenty-fourth printing of 1990. This is the sort of book that every university press dreams of having on its list.

I suspect that this translation, though widely read, has been read most often in small pieces, as astrology for intellectuals. Someone who might disdain to read a horoscope in the local newspaper (or would not want to be seen doing so) could speak with some pride of having consulted the *I Ching*. Following a complex process of tossing coins and performing the necessary calculations, the resulting hexagram would lead the reader into the book to find the applicable ancient Chinese wisdom through an English translation from the German. The barriers of language, culture and history seemed secondary to the promise of some transparent universality, a universality encouraged by Jung's foreword. Wilhelm's translation was that of a scholar, but of a scholar whose intellectual inclinations pointed directly toward the *I Ching*'s present home in the "Eastern Religions" section of bookstores. Once again the *I Ching* has demonstrated its durability, having outlasted the Madras bedspreads. And it was surely the Wilhelm/Baynes *I Ching*, rather than James Legge's almost unredeemably Victorian translation, that spawned a minor industry of popular *I Ching* translations, where the book is "made easy," "explained for the present day" and offered with Buddhist or Taoist flavorings.

The category of "Eastern Religions" is an interesting one. The exact name of the rubric varies from bookstore to bookstore, as does the division among allied categories: religion, philosophy and "new age." Since the size of these sections is an innocent function of profitability, a casual survey suggests that the category of "Eastern Religions" does not have a public as large as Mysteries, Cookbooks or Computer books, but one significantly larger than Poetry. The section for "Classics," that is, all pretwentieth century literature, is sometimes larger. Books in the "Eastern Religions" section are a diverse lot. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, with an occasional touch of Shintoism and Zoroastrianism, are often thrown together by the non-sectarian accidents of alphabetical order. The names alphabetized are sometimes family names, sometimes given names, sometimes pseudonyms and sometimes title names. The dates attributed to the older works may verge on the Cro-Magnon.

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recent decade, millennia are immaterial in "Eastern Religions." These works are all "old." The difficulties presented by them are understood as proof of their profundity, rather than as problems of historical, cultural and linguistic differences—or simply bad translation. The presumption that sustains this entire category of "Eastern Religions" is that these works *are* profound, and that if we but look within ourselves, we will understand.

Richard Lynn's new translation of the *I Ching* marks something of the distance we have come since the age of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation. That distance has not been traveled without some cost. There is no Jung here to write the foreword, ruminating on how such a work might be taken seriously—there is no longer any promise of a direct and easy encounter with ancient wisdom. We should note the subtitle of Lynn's translation: *A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi.* What we find in Lynn's translation is not a timeless and transparent text of wisdom, but an ancient work that the Chinese themselves read through layers of historical interpretation. As Lynn tells us in the introduction, the Wilhelm version was highly dependent on commentaries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Lynn's exegete, Wang Bi, represents an interpretation from the third century.

In the *I Ching*, we have a textual circumstance not unlike that of the Bible. To some it is a text of absolute revelation, to all it is a work of immense value. Its promise of truth is direct, yet we receive it mediated by history—by levels of recension, by varying translations and translations of translations, by scholarly and religious disputes of interpretation, by vast gulfs of culture and history. As in the interpretation of the Bible in the Reformation, in China, beginning in the seventeenth century, there was an intellectual movement to get through the layers of historical interpretation and recover the "original" meaning of the *I Ching.* As in the interpretation of the Bible, moreover, this only compounded the uncertainties and the disputes. Once again as with the Bible in the West, there are those in China who possess utter conviction that they understand the *I Ching* perfectly; but assurance decreases in inverse proportion to learning.

Lynn's instincts are those of the scholar, but he recognizes the essential contradiction of his enterprise. In his introduction he tries to walk a fine line between the historically layered text that he is translating and the timeless book of wisdom. In acknowledging history and cultural difference, Lynn is also compelled to step out of the protective glow of the mysterious East and mysterious antiquity, and to confront the fact that the gender and social hierarchies mentioned in the *I Ching* do impinge on our ability to accept it directly (something true of virtually all premodern and much modern writing). Lynn raises the question and answers it:

> How then should one read this translation of a Chinese classic and its commentaries, rooted as they are in value-laden assumptions that many may find, if not alien and offensive, at least out of date and superfluous? The work is so rich in meaning that it should be read on several levels. To get at this richness, I suggest that the reader accept the historical reality of the text's assumptions, let them inform a historical appreciation of traditional Chinese society, and then bracket or put them aside and allow the work to address the primary issues with which it is concerned: the interrelatedness of personal character and destiny; how position defines scope of action; how position and circumstance define appropriate modes of behavior; how the individual is always tied to others in a web of interconnected causes and effects; how one set of circumstances inevitably changes into another; and how change itself is the great constant—and flexible response to it the only key to happiness and success. There is a core of insights here concerning the structure of human relationships and individual behavior that can, I believe, speak to this and any other age—if we but allow it to do so.

As a concession Lynn includes a section in the introduction on "How to Cast a Hexagram," but generally his *I Ching* is not "user-friendly." John Blofeld's 1965 translation, clearly directed to the "Eastern Religions" market, even offers examples of how to apply the hexagrams to daily life, such as using a hexagram to decide whether or not to divorce your husband. Lynn tells us that there is much to learn from the *I Ching*, but he does not suggest consulting the book for such decisions. Wilhelm was a believer as well as a scholar, and his extensive commentaries recast the issues of the *I Ching* in terms relatively accessible to the European reader. Not so Lynn; after a brief introduction, he drops his readers directly into Wang Bi's prefatory essays. These are the real thing, and they are not light reading.

Lynn is translating the *I Ching* as interpreted by the earliest full commentary we possess. His translation not only follows Wang Bi, it includes Wang Bi's commentary, set off from the main text by curly brackets and a different typeface. The English reader meets the *I Ching* not only in a very accurate translation, but also in the way that the Chinese reader always encountered it, with a commentary interspersed through the text.

We have here a situation of some interest. On the one hand, Lynn's translation of the *I Ching* not only provides the Wang Bi commentary, but also offers a much more accurate translation than the Wilhelm/Baynes translation, one that unlike theirs makes sense in the way the Chinese makes sense. On the other hand, it remains to be seen whether Lynn's *I Ching* will replace the Wilhelm/Baynes translation in the "Eastern Religions" section of the major bookstore chains, though I am sure that Columbia University Press has its institutional fingers crossed. One reason that Lynn may not supplant Wilhelm/Baynes is a scholarly heaviness about his translation; but a deeper reason may lie in what an audience is seeking in the "Eastern Religions" section.

For the precise way in which the Wilhelm/Baynes translation twists the Chinese produces a remarkable oracular grace—passages that sound profound, and with sufficient ingenuity on the part of the reader, may even become profound. The combination of Wilhelm and Baynes was a lucky one: Baynes fashioned out of Wilhelm's German a distinct English idiom, compelling by its rhythms, by its biblical echoes, by its skillful choice of words, by its surprising conjunction of abstractions that perhaps owes more to Rilke than to the Chinese. Where the Chinese is clear, Wilhelm/Baynes is often mysterious. After such an encounter with mystery in the translation, the Wilhelm commentary then guides the translation back toward sense, formally embodying the experience of an obscure ancient text interpretable to the modern world.

No doubt thinking of the wide dissemination of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation, Lynn gently warns his readers that his interpretation will be rather differ-

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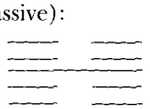
ent from those of his predecessors. This is an understatement. While the following is an extreme example, we might consider the Judgment (the oldest layer of the *I Ching* text) on the first hexagram Qian (translated in Wilhelm/Baynes as "The Creative"). In Wilhelm/Baynes, we read: "The Creative works sublime success, / Furthering through perseverance." In Lynn's translation, this is: "Qian consists of fundamentality, prevalence, fitness and constancy." Comparing the two versions, we are just barely able to match up Wilhelm/Baynes's "perseverance" with Lynn's "constancy," and we have some sense how deeply at odds the translation of five Chinese words can be. This is an unfortunate example, perhaps, to set beside my earlier statement that Lynn's translation makes sense as the Chinese does, but this is how Chinese commentators generally read the passage: as four qualities of the first hexagram Qian.

Let us consider the sixteenth hexagram, Yu. Wilhelm/Baynes renders it as "Enthusiasm," and Lynn offers it as "Contentment." Wilhelm/Baynes translates the Judgment: "Enthusiasm. It furthers one to install helpers / And to set armies marching." Lynn prefers: "It is fitting to establish a chief and to send the army into action." There is an admirable clarity to this, the most ancient layer of the *I Ching*, in Lynn's version. We can imagine an ancient Chinese feudal lord getting this advice from a cast of the milfoil stalks and taking action upon it. The Wilhelm/Baynes translation, by contrast, creates a disjunction, and thus a mystery, by the apparently modest scale of "installing helpers," whatever that might mean, and the apocalyptically grand scale of "setting armies marching." But in his commentary Wilhelm explains the "helpers" as feudal lords.

The hexagram Yu has a yang line (an unbroken line, associated with the hard and active) in the fourth position (reading up from the bottom of the hexagram), and all its other lines are yin (broken lines, passive):



An active chief or leader is established and, as in an army, the central question becomes one of free compliance, how within any enterprise some elements or agents "go along with" an active leader. Thus Lynn renders the "Commentary on the Judgments. Yu [Contentment] is such that hardness [Fourth yang] has its ambitions realized by getting others [the yin lines] to respond. When action occurs as a result of such compliance, there is Yu [Contentment]." The translation is not graceful, but it is clear.

This is how the Wilhelm/Baynes translation handles the same passage: "Enthusiasm. The firm finds correspondence, and its will is done. Devotion to movement: this is Enthusiasm." The clipped oracular style, with its wonderful phrases such as "devotion to movement," is far more persuasive than Lynn's. I don't know what it means, but it sounds good. This is "Eastern Religions."

Through the course of antiquity, diviners and Confucian teachers made additions to the core sentences attached to each hexagram. The elementary situations of the divination answers were often extended by analogies, until the "situation" to which the hexagram applied became less specific and more abstract. Taken as a whole, the sixty-four hexagrams were supposed to represent all the possibilities of change, with each particular hexagram representing one normative phase of change. Thus the situation of the hexagram Yu can be extended beyond the free compliance of subordinates to a leader (in an army or any collective action). The same essential process can be seen in nature itself ("Heaven and Earth"), where all particular things "go along with" Nature's motive forces. The unforced agreement of collective human action finds a counterpart in natural process. The Commentary on the Judgments continues, in Lynn's version:

> Because Yu [contentment] involves action done out of compliance, then even Heaven and Earth resemble it in this respect, so will it not prove all the more capable to establishing a chief or sending the army into action? Heaven and Earth act only out of compliance, thus the sun and moon do not err, nor do the four seasons vary.

In the Wilhelm/Baynes version we read:

> Because Enthusiasm shows devotion to movement, heaven and earth are at its side. How much the more then is it possible to install helpers and set armies marching! Heaven and Earth move with devotion, therefore the sun and moon do not swerve from their courses, and the four seasons do not err.

Again, the Wilhelm/Baynes version strikes a beautiful spark, with Heaven and Earth "at the side of" Enthusiasm, drawn by its "devotion to movement." It is not what the Chinese says, nor does it follow from what precedes, as the Chinese does; but it comes to the edge of poetry. Much depends on the difference between "devotion to movement" and "action done out of compliance." The phrase "devotion to movement" matches nicely the translation of Yu as "Enthusiasm," and has a personal intensity of

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uncertain application that makes it memorable. "Action done out of compliance" is an awkward phrase, but it makes more sense.

Lynn's new translation will enable someone with a persevering interest in the Chinese tradition to read the *I Ching*. Such a reader will discover a systematic attempt to conceptualize processes and relationships in nature and society on a high level of generality. It is fascinating in its difference from our own conceptual habits, yet it is not completely mysterious or impossibly alien. But this historical *I Ching* probably cannot replace the Wilhelm/Baynes translation, with its Marco Polo promises of riches. The trouble with Marco Polo promises of riches is that the seeker can find only what he or she is already looking for. They say that the Aztecs kept giving Cortés ornaments of quetzal feathers, but he turned them away in his hunger for gold.

Earlier in this century, Asia and the other far horizons of the European world gained something by their mystery. It was an ersatz mystery, woven through with immense Western confidence. Still, it sparked commitment and interest. This has by no means disappeared; the mystery survives as a distinct "market." In the scholarly community, from which Lynn's translation comes, the situation has changed profoundly. Greater knowledge and acceptance of non-Western works like the *I Ching* within the university has its price. Now a young person is almost as likely to be assigned a translation from the Confucian classics as a translation from Plato. Both may prove interesting, but by and large they belong to the involuntary realm of "assignments."

Perhaps the transformations of the *I Ching*'s translations are themselves no less signs of change than the Chinese original. The age of the Wilhelm translation was, appropriately twisting the sense of the Chinese term, one of Enthusiasm; Heaven and Earth were at the translator's side and the book inspired devotion. Lynn's translation yields a blander Contentment; we can trust the depth of the translator's understanding of the ancient text and go along with it out of "compliance."

STEPHEN OWEN teaches Chinese and comparative literature at Harvard University.

Hearts of Darkness

BY NADER MOUSAVIZADEH

Civil Wars: From L.A. to Bosnia by Hans Magnus Enzensberger

(The New Press, 144 pp., $18)

One evening last year, in the deceptively cordial setting of a dinner at an Oxford college, one of the guests demanded of a captain of German industry his view of recent neo-Nazi attacks on immigrants and asylum-seekers. Visibly agitated, his brandy and cigar disrupted by reality, this chairman of a vast conglomerate hesitated and then muttered: "They are not political acts, these attacks ... it is simply ... how shall I put it ... *Gewalt*." He saw no need to translate the German word for violence, or the sense of helplessness that often accompanies it.

But there are distinctions between acts of violence, and they have moral, political and philosophical implications. These distinctions are crucial to any analysis of the experience of post-cold war Europe. From the shattered Balkans of the south to the small towns of Germany and France, the state is faced with armed challenges to its territorial legitimacy in one case and to its monopoly on the use of force in the other. Yet not all violence is political violence, and not all challenges to the rule of law are civil wars.

Nonetheless, the German writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger sees civil wars everywhere: "from L.A. to Bosnia," in the words of his provocative subtitle, and from Hoyerswerda to Birmingham. His is a bleak and bitter view expressed in the three essays on nationalism and Europe that comprise this book. Global bipolarity has given way, he says, to universal anarchy, and a historically unprecedented nihilism has gripped the great urban centers of the West. The young nationalists of our era are fighting civil wars that are "about nothing at all." Their conflicts are completely divorced from ideology, without substantive content or conviction. Death and destruction are the ends, and not the means, of these wars. For Enzensberger, modern civil wars "ignite spontaneously from inside," and they are as much about hatred of the self as hatred of the other.

Enzensberger's book reads as the despairing cry of a rationalist surrounded by irrationalism, as the expression of a universalist's disgust. And yet he is a rationalist without hope and a universalist without faith. The teaching of his book is that we in the West should no longer fool ourselves about our ability to alleviate the consequences of war and violence. We should give up. He describes universalist morality as the "last refuge of Eurocentrism" (a point which rather vitiates his own standpoint for criticism) and he insists that its days are numbered. For all the cosmopolitanism of his tone, Enzensberger prefers that we draw ourselves in and tend to our own. Our "foremost concern must be for our children, our neighbors, our immediate surroundings."

In the case of the Balkan tragedy, this becomes an explicitly isolationist message, as when he instructs his countrymen: "Before we put a spoke in the wheel of the warring Bosnians, we ought to mop up the civil war in our own country. Our priority is not Somalia, but Hoyerswerda and Rostock, Mölln and Solingen." These are words with great resonance in a weak and weary Europe. It is a continent paralyzed by the prospect of ethnic war, unwilling to see through the manipulations of nationalist demagogues, unprepared to risk lives in the effort to save the Balkan peoples from their demons (more precisely, the Bosnian people from their Serbian demons). Indeed, with every outbreak of ethnic conflict in the borderlands of Europe, the "them" seems ceaselessly to grow, while the "us" is shrinking at a furious pace. And so European liberals and conservatives alike are turning against the politics of intervention.

Enzensberger joins the do-nothings by urging that we give up our "guilt-trip" about the Third World and realize that their victims are not our victims, that their sufferings are not our sufferings. It is only because we regard non-Western civil wars as different from our own, qualitatively and quantitatively, that we feel obliged to intervene. And this, according to Enzensberger, is a mistake. Here he betrays more than a passing nostalgia for the cold war. In the good old days of ideology, meaning was everywhere, and it was easily legible. In these post-ideological days, by contrast, Enzenberger sees only struggles that are virtually meaningless. In the bipolar world, when philosophical and political systems were pitted against each other, the masses of the developing world killed, and died, for ideas, and so they deserved our interest. But now their conflicts are

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hollow and tribal and nihilistic, as are our own. It is, in other words, just ... *Gewalt.*

But is it, really? Do all these "molecular civil wars," as Enzensberger calls them, really "ignite spontaneously," and are they truly "about nothing at all"? Must we resign ourselves to the inevitability of violence, and look inward and away? Are the deaths in Los Angeles really no different from the deaths in Bosnia and Somalia? The American experiment is no doubt tortured, but it remains a testament to the possibility of a multinational and multicultural state. The same can hardly be said of many polities threatened by "civil wars" today.

Showing that violence in Los Angeles is different from violence in Bosnia is not a complicated task: Enzensberger's error is almost self-evident. Where he sees a "civil war"—simply because the rioters were black, and the focus of their rage a racist, white police department—most observers have seen an explosive combination of economic resentment, political disenfranchisement and racial tension. Economic rivalry between blacks and Koreans was mixed with ethnic and cultural resentments. Whatever else South-Central was, it was not a civil war. But to rest with this refutation of Enzensberger's claim is to rest too soon. For his book is part of a larger debate about the interpretation of nationalism. It is, in fact, an aphoristic restatement of an older school of thought about nationalism, one that is gaining ground with every outbreak of seemingly inexplicable nationalist violence.

Nationalism, in this view, is the consequence of the modernizing, industrializing processes of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. During this period, the old foundations of political and civic life were swept away, and replaced with mass literacy, urbanization and bureaucratization. National sentiment, in this view, is utterly reactive, a manufacture of social and economic conditions. This is, then, a materialist interpretation of the phenomenon. It rejects appeals to culture and subjectivities, to perennialist and primordialist theories of the nation that derive nationalism from shared experience, and credit the importance of symbols, values, beliefs and inherited ideas.

In this reading, there is nothing primary or timeless about group identity. The antiquity of the nation, and the ancient roots of ethnic communities and their identities, are dismissed as merely "invented traditions," in the words of E.J. Hobsbawm, an important proponent of this interpretation (and an early admirer of Enzensberger's book). Ethnic nationalism is seen as no more than a fevered expression of a false consciousness, or a false subconsciousness, founded on arbitrary perceptions of ethnic distinctness that will disappear with the advent of political modernization and economic equality.

From such a perspective, according to which clan and culture are figments of a parochial imagination, and the nation no more than an artificial construct, it is easy to regard violence in Bosnia as indistinguishable from violence in Los Angeles, and the struggle for pluralism in Sarajevo as similar to the outburst of rage in South-Central. It sheds very little light, however, on the phenomenon of civil war in the contemporary world.

Enzensberger surveys the battlegrounds of the "molecular civil wars" and sees, correctly, a spectre of marauding bands haunting the globe. Today's protagonists "can survive without a Führer," they are destroying themselves as much as the other, and are acting out a patricide of sorts in their violent revolts. But it does not follow, nor is it particularly reassuring, that the German skinhead "knows nothing about national socialism. He's not interested in history. The Swastika and Hitler salutes are optional extras."

Enzensberger would appear not only to overestimate the political consciousness of the original Hitler Youth, but also to underestimate that of its contemporary incarnation. Skinheads have a view of the world; it may be coarse, but it is not empty. Enzensberger, moreover, generalizes irresponsibly from German experience. The German nationalist phenomenon may indeed be owed partly to the "irreconcilable problem of wealth that brings no joy," but this does not mean that the partisan in Sarajevo is fighting for "joy." He is fighting for the very existence of his nation. And that is not an arbitrary or creedless fight.

"The original target of our hatred was probably always our neighbor," Enzensberger writes. "Only with the formation of larger communities was the stranger on the other side of the border declared an enemy." This is simplistic and historically dubious. There were groups before there were nations; indeed there were always groups. And there were enemies and strangers and aliens and others prior to the creation of large communities and the establishment of borders. Nationalism has been responsible for many crimes and many tragedies, but Enzensberger blames nationalism for too much. If only nationalism would disappear, he seems to believe, then evil would disappear, too.

The arbitrariness of this view also gives rise to an unwarranted alarmism about the West, and complacency toward civil wars elsewhere. It is not true that civil

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wars can "escalate at any time to epidemic proportions," or that "every carriage on the underground can become a miniature Bosnia." Enzensberger continues:

> You don't need Jews to have a pogrom.... It's enough to know that someone supports a different football club; that his green-grocer's shop is doing better than the one next door; that he dresses differently; that he speaks a different language; that he wears a headscarf or needs a wheelchair. Not to conform is to risk death.

He is right that there are characteristics common to all these outbreaks of violence—a contempt for civil society, a disregard for life and property, a wanton cruelty toward the other, however defined. And yet a hooligan riot in Birmingham is not a Sarajevo waiting to happen. The dissimilarities are much greater than the similarities. Envy of the greengrocer's success is not the same, and not nearly as dangerous, as linguistic and religious rivalries.

Enzensberger rather romanticizes the nationalist wars of the past, insisting that they were more than "irrational brawls" and that they made "constructive contributions." Well, some were, and some weren't; some did, some didn't. To judge nationalism purely by its rational content is to assume the priority of reason in a realm where reason alone is an inadequate measure. There are, to be sure, "irrational" elements to what animates the Balkan nationalists, but the irrationality of belonging and home and community is not necessarily the irrationality of murder and nihilism. It is to such "irrationality" that most people owe their sense of self in the world.

Indeed, the contemporary belief that nationalism can be nothing but aggressively chauvinistic is itself one of the tragic consequences of the Serbian success in the Balkan war. It militates against Western support not only for the nationalist bullies, but more importantly for the nationalist victims. And so, in a perverse irony, the group feeling of the victim is viewed as no less demonic than the group feeling of the aggressor. The relativism of Enzensberger's interpretation is never more apparent than in his prescriptions for Western policy.

Strangely, Enzensberger begins with the assumption that realpolitik is dead with the end of the cold war, since foreign adventures and "brotherly aid [cost] more than [they bring] in return." "Capital" is retreating from the hunting grounds of foreign intervention, having realized that "state-regulated slaughter does not pay sufficient dividends." This is the cynicism of a somewhat embarrassed Marxist. It is also wrong: if anything, the end of the cold war has brought about a new era of realpolitik, and the Bosnians have been the first great victims of this era.

Enzensberger goes to bizarre lengths to justify the abdication of Western responsibility in the Balkans, as in this claim about the callousness of non-Westerners:

> Anyone who has ever tried to discuss the problems of Northern Ireland, or of the Basque country, with a Kurd or a Tamil knows that he is likely to come across a blank wall of indifference. The response he ought to expect runs: "What do I care about your stories?" The man from Asia will tell you that he has other problems to deal with. We should think twice before condemning his answer.

Really? Has Enzensberger never met an Asian who thinks about Europe? And who, exactly, is the "man from Asia"? Why, exactly, shouldn't we think about the calamities of the Kurd or the Tamil? And is it really the case that an ethic of universal concern is not valid unless it is universally shared? Enzensberger is right to observe "how uneasily the desire to stand up for justice everywhere sits with the barbarity of the everyday." But there is no contradiction between the everywhere and the everyday, except in his own mind. The real danger does not lie in the concern of interventionists, but in the fatalism of isolationists.

Enzensberger is incisive when addressing the dilemma of the immigrant condition in Western Europe. He is, in this matter, acutely aware of the contingencies of home and identity in any nation, and compares the territorial community to passengers recently settled in a railway compartment:

> Two new passengers open the compartment door. From this instant the status of those who entered earlier changes. Only a moment ago, they were the intruders; now, all at once, they are natives. They belong to the sedentary clan of compartment-occupants and claim all the privileges the latter believe are due to them. The defense of an "ancestral" territory that was only recently occupied appears paradoxical. The occupants do not empathize with the newcomers, who have to struggle against the same opposition and face the same difficult initiation which they recently underwent.

This metaphor brilliantly captures the ambivalence of belonging for native and newcomer alike—but only for a certain kind of newcomer. If the first newcomer is less like the "original native" than the second newcomer, in religion or in ethnicity, it is the "native" and the most recent newcomer who form the alliance. In other words, acceptance is not only a matter of temporal priority, but also of ancestral priority. This is crucial to an understanding of contemporary Muslim and Asian immigration in Europe, and the immigrants' potential for inclusion in European societies. In any case, there is no plausible argument for a homogeneous nativism in Germany, a land geographically fated to be the site of wars and invasions, migrations and settlements. Enzensberger's concern for the immigrants is genuine, and he ends with a brave and damning indictment of the German state for its inability, and its unwillingness, to protect immigrants: "We Germans cannot parade ourselves as guarantors of freedom and champions of human rights while mobs of German thugs and arsonists are spreading fear and terror day and night."

In "The Great Migration," the last of the three essays, Enzensberger returns to Germany and German violence. Since civil conflict is everywhere and indistinguishable, from Colombo to Compton, so, too, is there nothing unique about the return of xenophobia in Germany. "Xenophobia is a universal phenomenon," he says, and rejects those who look to German history (and historical guilt) for answers. He locates the roots of modern German xenophobia more generally in "the precarious self-consciousness o

The Lord is My Shepherd I Shall Not Want

In August, in upstate New York,
summer turns sullen.
Blacktop highways sticky as licorice.
Red earth cracked like an old farmer's hands.

One by one they left the high stone house
of their ancestors.
One by one entering the graveyard tottering
downhill behind the Ransomville Lutheran Church.

I wasn't one of them, I escaped early.
I never believed.
I don't believe anything anyone has ever told me.
I wouldn't believe even you if you swore to me
the deepest truth of your tinsel heart.

JOYCE CAROL OATES

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the nation." He chooses not to probe the nature of this particularly German "self-consciousness," offering only the general phenomena of resentment and self-hatred as explanations. There is nothing here about the special course of German history or the special character of German nationalism, nothing about the particular reasons that Germans might have for self-hatred. This amounts to an attempt to free Germany from its exceptionalism. If all "molecular civil wars" are like each other, then the Germans need not measure the present in the light of the past. Alas, no nation's history is so easily masterable.

Enzensberger's alarm about the more savage consequences of nationalism is not misplaced. Nor is his emphasis on its occasional "autism" unilluminating. But defining violence as violence, pure and simple, empties cultures of their content, denies culture its pride of place in the formation of identity, and renders unintelligible the readiness of individuals to make ultimate sacrifices for shared identities. Enzensberger is not a doctrinaire thinker, but he has not advanced much beyond the old Marxist failure to understand, and to tolerate, the reality of nationalism. This proud defender of reason is selling reason short. Reason is perfectly capable of addressing the unreason of national life, of holding nationalism to standards of truth and decency; but not if reason rests in denial and contempt. •

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 5*

To the editors:

What are we to make of the fact that TNR thought it necessary to present fifteen pages of criticism of Murray and Herrnstein *before* their article? While I applaud your decision not to ignore the debate, I am insulted you believed we should read them through the prisms of their critics.

JOHN J. DI CLEMENTE
Tinley Park, Illinois

The editor replies:

The reason for placing the responses before the main article was two-fold: our main article always abuts Stanley Kauffmann, and it seemed odd to make an exception in this case; and we had the Murray-Herrnstein article before we had many of the responses, and production deadlines make it far more convenient to lay out the earlier pieces in the middle of the magazine. Prosaic? Yes. Ideologically motivated? No. I'm afraid we didn't have the time even to think about it.

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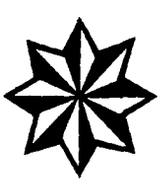

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Give me back my name

IF YOU'RE CALLED MATTHEW OR Jennifer you don't see smirks and titters at the mention of others who share your name. And between Michaels—say, would-be Senator Huffington and R.E.M. vocalist Stipe—no special connection is assumed. Not so for those of us with more exotic names. My cocktail party conversations invariably begin thus: "Hi, I'm Dante." "As in...?" "Yes, as in.... Yes, I do hear that joke all the time.... No, I'm not Italian." And besides my father, I don't know any other Dantes. One positive upshot is that, even if I can't always distinguish myself intellectually among my friends and co-workers, at least I'm the only Dante around. I've grown to guard this patch of turf jealously. So imagine my shock when, in using Nexis to dig up an old article I'd written, I pulled up not just my story but also a graduation announcement for one Dante C. Ramos of Roanoke, Virginia. Last year TNR Editor Andrew Sullivan had expunged my middle initials from the masthead, asking, "How many other Dante Ramoses are there?" This Virginia pretender and I are about the same age, and if he goes into journalism, we're both screwed. No one will believe there's more than one of us.

THE HILARIOUS NEW MOVIE *Clerks* has corroded my uniqueness even further. In a grab for easy symbolism, writer-director Kevin Smith has constructed his plot as an *Inferno* sketch and christened his protagonist Dante Hicks. It will not surprise you that Hicks complains that his life is a "pit" or that his wiser friend Randal—"Randal" has the same meter as "Virgil," get it?—has to guide him through his problems. There are some stark differences between Hicks and me. Hicks has, for example, a goatee and a penchant for street hockey—two attributes that for structural reasons I'll probably never share. But the convenience store universe he inhabits is all too familiar. I had the same job part-time during the recessionary summer of 1990, and I can testify that the customer types that inhabit Hicks's Quick Stop are legit. Into my convenience store came the same crowd of porn fiends for whom *Penthouse* was insufficient, mothers who tunneled through the shelves to find "a container of milk that won't go bad for, like, a decade" and young children trying to buy cigarettes. Because he hates his job, Dante treats it as if it's something more than it really is. Consequently, having pinned an admirable significance to the word "clerk," he lectures Randal about the sacred responsibilities that come with being one. Randal, by contrast, has made peace with his video store job; since it's menial, he shows no qualms about subverting it by pointedly ignoring customers and insulting their intelligence.

IN CREATING RANDAL, SMITH MAY have taken inspiration from *Sabotage*, a two-year-old book I recently discovered in a Georgetown punk store. It's a miscellany of true stories in which disgruntled employees undermine their workplaces. One mailroom worker at the Heritage Foundation battled the think tank's conservative politics by throwing checks into the paper shredder. Bus drivers revolted against drug testing by feeding marijuana brownies to management at a post-Christmas party. Our office can be frustrating, too, but I won't be squishing pre-chewed Trident into the fax machine anytime soon. I'm too hidebound and insufficiently nihilistic to follow Randal's example. But he's right about one thing: whether clerkdom includes diligence is less a function of ontological necessity than of a clerk's naughtiness. "Clerk" for Randal *is* just a name, devoid of content.

ECONOMISTS THINK AS RANDAL does. Some things, such as a customer who's so annoying that you spit bottled water at him or the amount of goods and services produced in the United States, are real; others, like a job title or the overall price level, are nominal. That's why many liberal macroeconomists think that moderate inflation doesn't really harm anyone. That's also why Alan Greenspan, who in last summer's book, *The Agenda*, was by my reading wrongly depicted as the Darth Vader of the American economy, is now being rightly depicted as the Darth Vader of the American economy. Interest rates are rising not to keep up with inflation, but because anything more than tepid growth might conceivably produce inflation. If it meant that a few hundred thousand of our neighbors could go back to work (real), surely most of us would happily suffer a tiny increase in the price level (nominal). I would. But the financial markets scoff because, according to one of the hoarier stock phrases found in economics textbooks, *inflation is a net transfer from creditors to debtors.* Full disclosure: I have a vested interest in such a transfer, no matter how minuscule. That's why no president has ever appointed to the Federal Reserve Board a struggling intern with a hemorrhaging bank account.

ANTI-FED TIRADES NOTWITHSTANDING, convenience store life doesn't lead automatically to a leftist conversion. Since it wasn't written as a vehicle for criticism of welfare programs, *Clerks* didn't show any Food Stamps horror stories. So I'll share my own: one customer regularly bought snacks with public assistance funds but spent $20 a week on lottery tickets. Another tried twice in one day to buy cigarettes with Food Stamps. The first time, I wasn't paying attention, and he succeeded. Several hours later he returned for another pack. I balked, so he bought a two-cent candy fish with a dollar stamp, collected the change and then repeated the process. With $1.96 in change he got the Marlboros. The message here isn't that all poor people or even most misuse Food Stamps. It's that when you set money aside and you call it something besides "money," but you don't change the fact that it's still substantially the same as money, the pointless nominal distinctions translate into a lot of candy fish. Better to give people a lump of real money and let them fend for themselves. You shouldn't sweat titles.

THAT'S WHY PEOPLE WHO THINK they have unique names shouldn't feel threatened when they find out they're not alone. Such Brit-pop also-rans as the Charlatans U.K., Wham! U.K. and The Mission U.K. made cheesy music, but not because they bumped up against American bands with similar monikers. I should therefore regret the sick pang of *Schadenfreude* that set in when, in 1992, an unfavorable redistricting plan forced Dante Fascell to retire from Florida's congressional delegation. Likewise, the Greek Macedonians, who view themselves as real Macedonians and the Slavic Macedonians as poseurs, shouldn't keep holding up international recognition for the homeland of the latter group. If I were a proud citizen of a scrappy, underappreciated realm—and since I vote in Rhode Island, presumably I am—I would be flattered if others wanted to name themselves after me. A little company might not be so bad.

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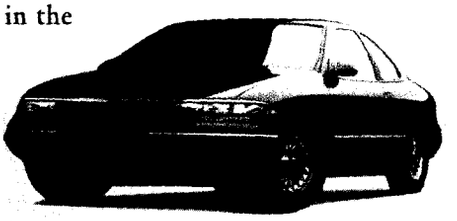

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